EURASIAN EXPERIENCES IN SHANGHAI AND CHINA'S TREATY PORTS UNCOVERED THROUGH FAMILY HISTORY

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Maternal Family Tree

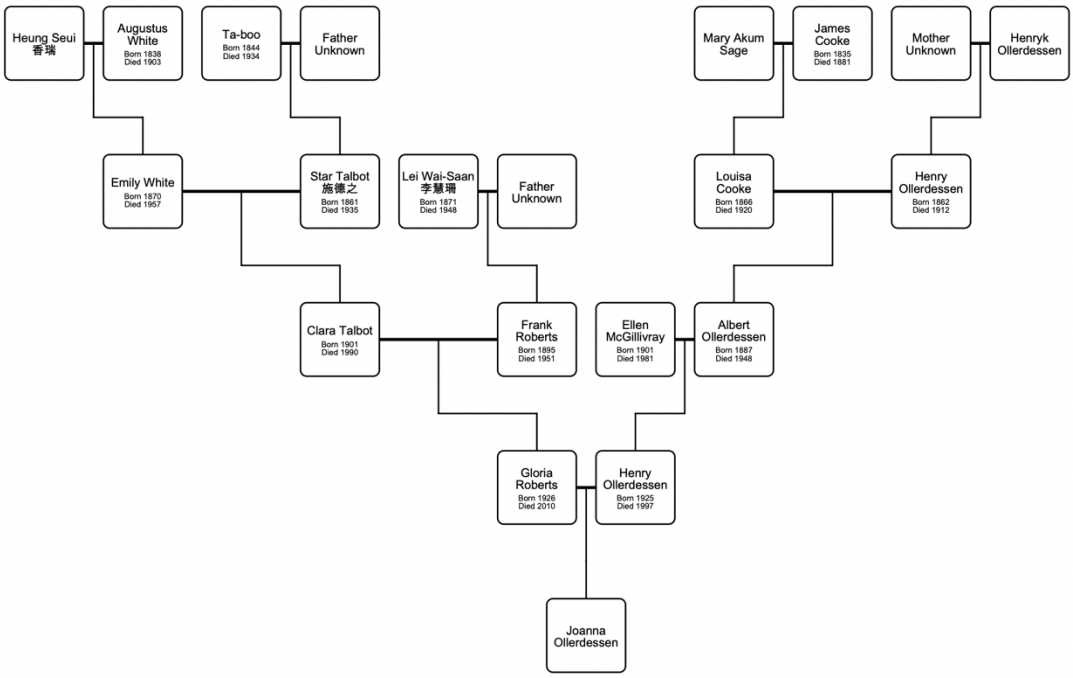

Figure 1 “Maternal Family Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included

1. Mary Sage and James Cooke

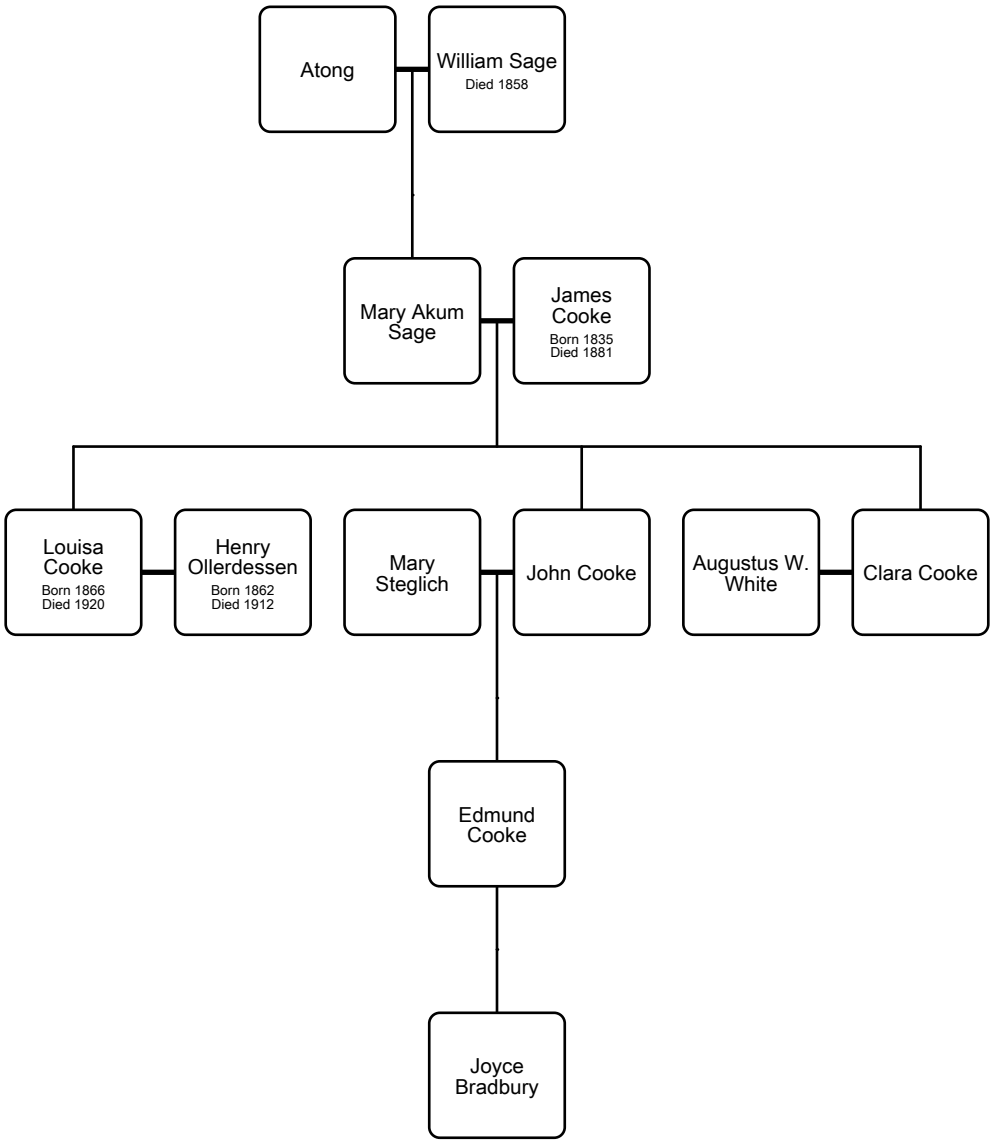

Figure 2 “1. Mary Sage and James Cooke Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included

2. Louisa Cooke and Henry Ollerdessen

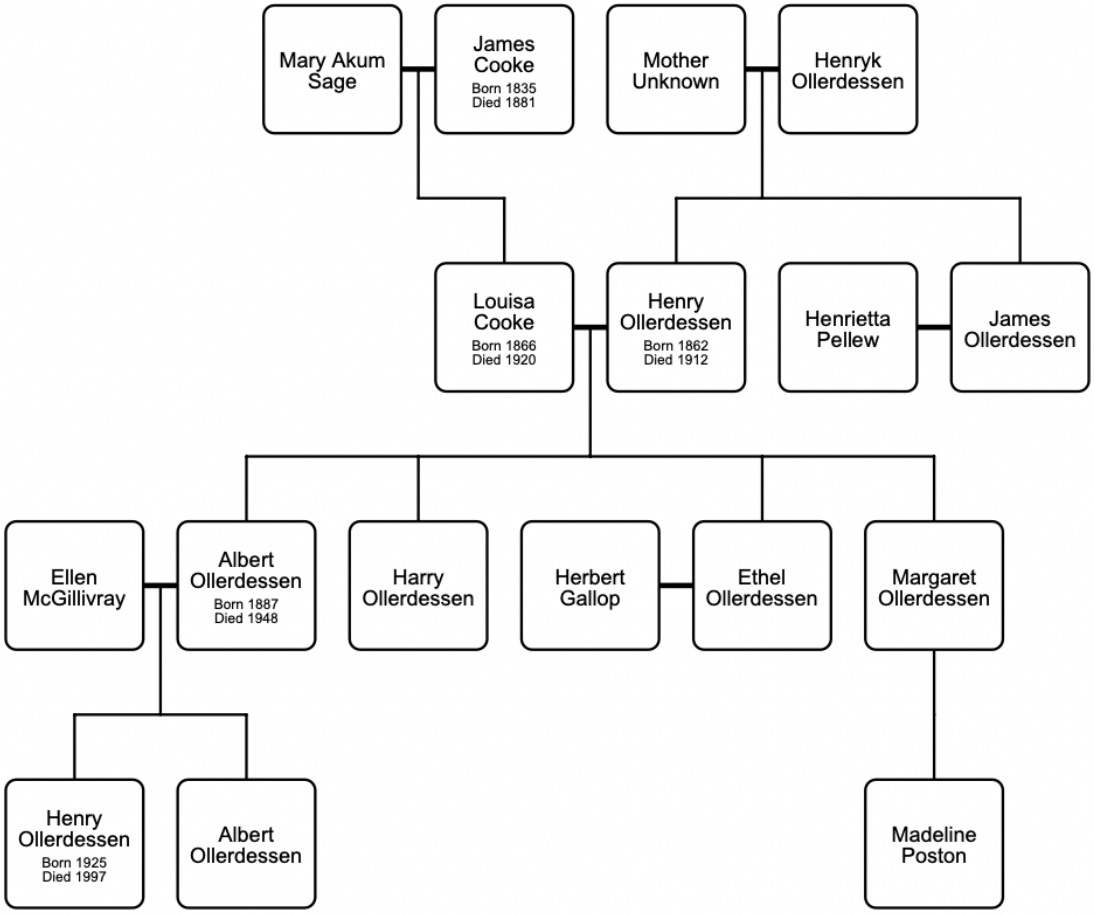

Figure 3 “2. Louisa Cooke and Henry Ollerdessen Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included

3. Heung Seui 香瑞 and Augustus White

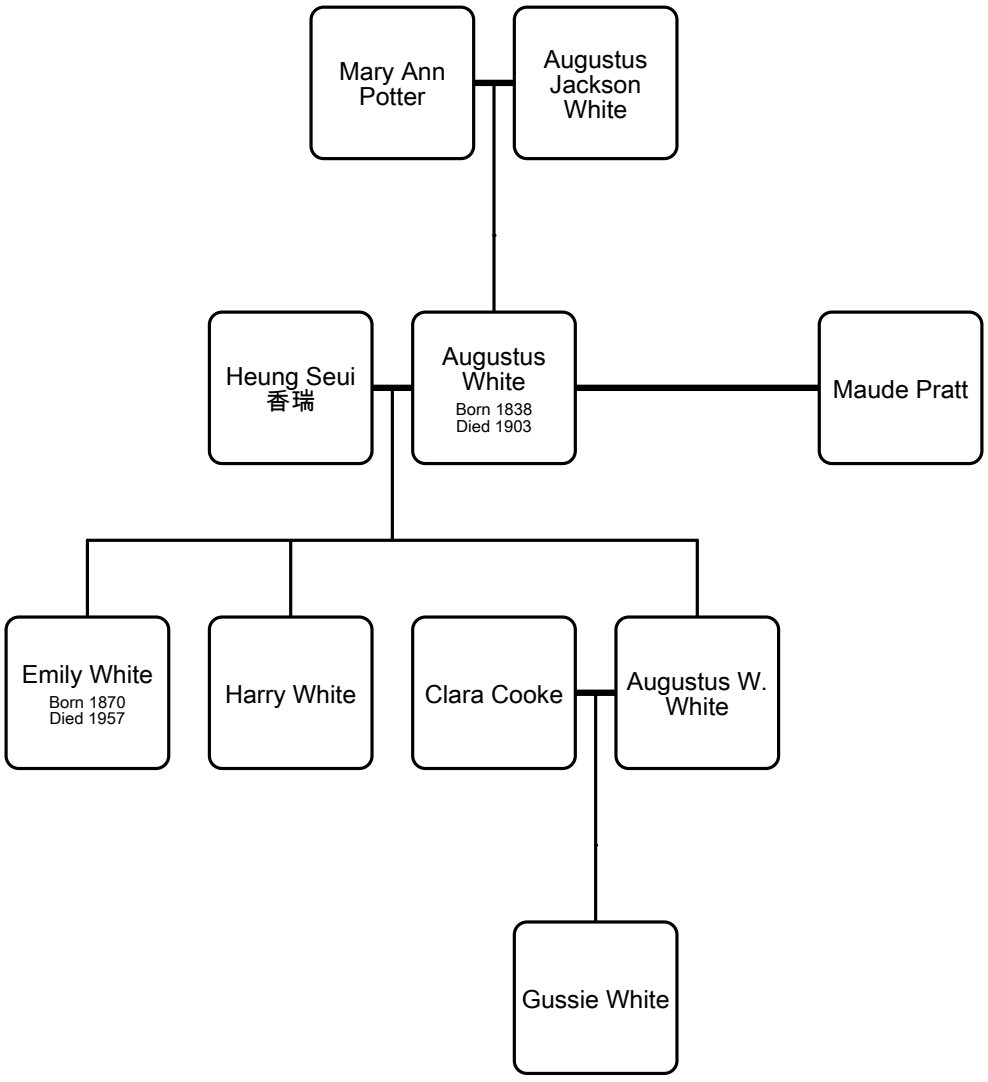

Figure 4 “3. Heung Seui 香瑞 and Augustus White Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included

4. Emily White and Star Talbot 施德之

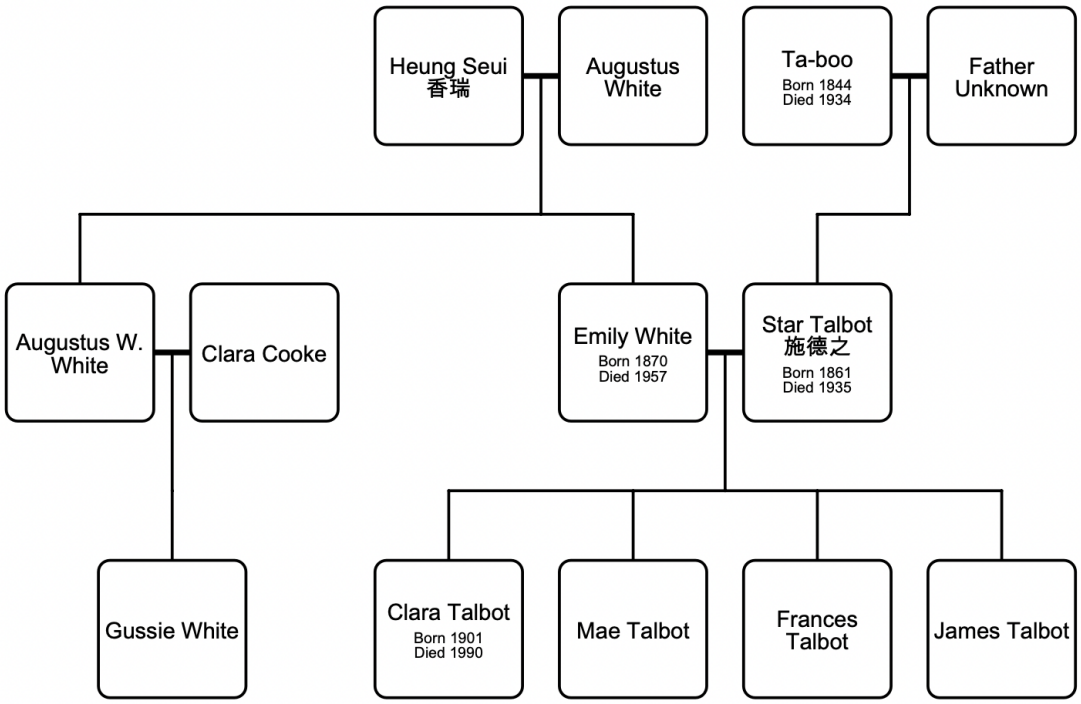

Figure 5 “4. Emily White and Star Talbot 施德之 Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included

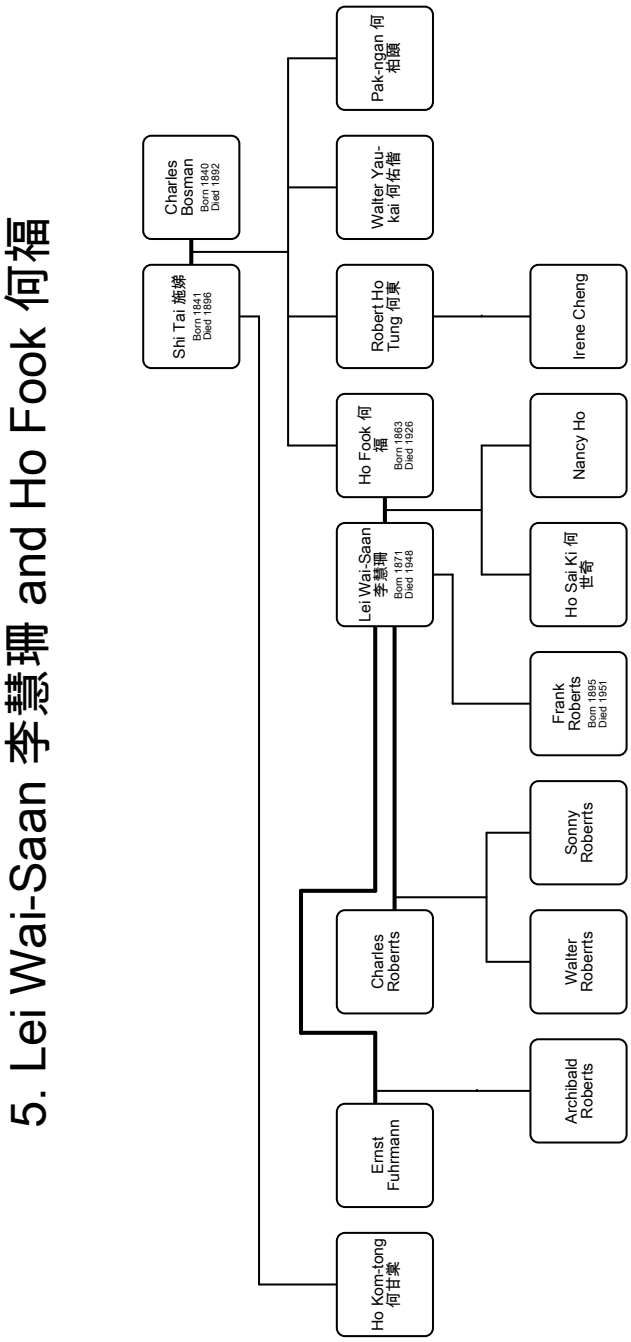

Figure 6 “5. Lei Wai-Saan 李慧珊 and Ho Fook 何福 Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included

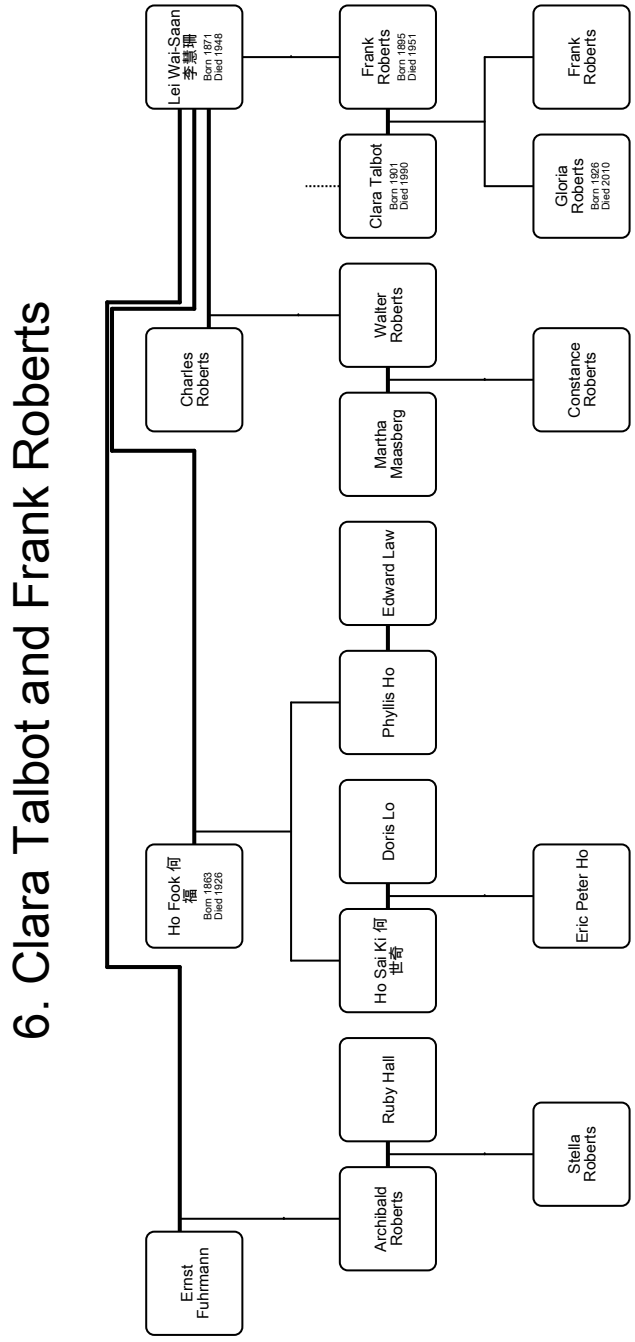

Figure 7 “6. Clara Talbot and Frank Roberts Tree”, created by author using Family Echo, www.familyecho.com, only individuals referenced in the article included, Clara Talbot’s extended family tree can be found on Figure 5 (xi)

Introduction

For over three-quarters of a century in an enclave in the Chinese city of Shanghai a collection of foreigners representing over forty home nations commingled and cohabited, forming a distinct cosmopolitan community. In February of 1943, Shanghai's International Settlement dissolved, and the land returned to the Chinese government after decades of legal privileges allowing foreigners to settle, trade, and self-govern. The International Settlement, a self-governing community within Shanghai but separate from the Chinese part of the city, existed for several decades leading to cultural exchanges complicated by the continuous negotiation over the nature of the relationship between the Chinese and the foreigners. At the same time, the Chinese in Shanghai reacted to changes in culture, technology, and ideology related to and separate from Western influence in Shanghai. Most encounters between foreigners and Chinese in Shanghai involved business dealings. However, few foreign residents attempted to learn Chinese languages. According to American Shanghai resident F.L. Hawks Pott, they "were content to live their own lives in their own way among a people whom they made little effort to understand."[1] Intimate and sexual encounters provided another meeting point between Chinese and foreign individuals. The early mostly male population of foreign settlers often engaged in sexual relationships with locals. Many of these relationships remained temporary and some involved sex work. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, some of

[1] F.L. Hawks Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai: Being An Account of the Growth and Development of the International Settlement* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1928), 1.

these relationships produced children. Eurasians, individuals of Chinese and European descent, negotiated their dual cultural background within this unique context.

Despite a diverse community of foreign nationals, Shanghai's Chinese, and foreign communities both generally discouraged interracial relationships. Shanghai-born Eurasian Joyce Symons expresses that she "was not totally accepted at best by either culture, nor totally despised at worst."[2] And historian Robert Bickers writes that within Shanghai's foreign settlements "you were judged by your 'race'. Eurasians…were generally socially excluded, however prosperous, were routinely discriminated against, and were the subject of public and cultural disdain."[3] Eurasians in Shanghai faced a difficult choice in how they presented themselves. While the multitudes of cultures influenced each other, cultural differences could be stark and revealing of an individual's background. Historian Emma Teng writes how, "Eurasians disrupt boundaries of colonizer and colonized, white and nonwhite, rendering them problematic figures in accepted paradigms of nationalist and ethnic histories."[4] Yet despite the limitations described by historians and memoirists, a close look at these relationships illuminates not only the difficulties faced in mixed-race relationships, but also the surprising leeway many of the children of these unions had in defining who they were. In fact, mixed heritage created unique opportunities and an unexpected range of choices both personally

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[2] Vicky Lee, *Being Eurasian: Memories Across Racial Divides* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 49.

[3] Robert A. Bickers, *Getting Stuck in for Shanghai: Putting the Kibosh on the Kaiser from the Bund*, Penguin Specials (Melbourne, Victoria: Penguin, 2014), 10.

[4] Emma Teng, *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China, and Hong Kong, 1842-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 28.

and professionally. Research into primary historical sources, family records, and contemporary historiography reveal family secrets and previously hidden histories. In this article I submit the stories of my direct ancestors as case studies of the experiences of Eurasians in Shanghai and China's treaty ports. Contrary to historians that emphasize the limitations on Eurasians in China, these stories show how mixed-race men and occasionally women could benefit from their backgrounds. They built businesses, hosted social gatherings, and even became distinguished figures in Shanghai's multicultural society. The social barriers and discrimination they faced were significant, but there was also a surprising amount of acceptance. The adaptability of Eurasians in traversing racial boundaries reflects Shanghai's status as a successful mixed-race city.

Figure 8 "Gloria and Henry Ollerdessen", 1948, Hong Kong, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

In 1948, two Eurasian individuals born in Shanghai, Gloria Roberts and Henry Ollerdessen (Figure 8) married in Hong Kong.[5] With familial ties in Shanghai for several generations, Gloria and Henry faced an uncertain future in the city they knew as home. Just two months after the International Settlement's termination, the Japanese

[5] "U.S., Consular Reports of Marriages, 1910-1949" digital image s.v. "Gloria Claire Roberts," http://www.Ancestry.com.

government in Shanghai interned Gloria, her mother, father, brother, grandmother, and other extended relatives.[6] Meanwhile her future husband Henry, the son of a Eurasian father and American mother, served in the American Air Force in World War II battles in Europe.[7] Born in the mid-1920s, Gloria and Henry experienced the height of Shanghai's cosmopolitanism. Pott wrote in his 1928 book, *A Short History of Shanghai,* "when a traveller arrives in Shanghai to-day he is struck by the fact that to all intents and purposes he might be in a large European city," writing further that Shanghai "is a very cosmopolitan place, a meeting-ground for people from all countries, a great and a unique city, one of the most remarkable in the world."[8] Gloria and Henry grew up in a city influenced by a myriad of cultures. The couple's marriage took place several years after the closing of the International Settlement and the dislocation of the foreign community, but their history and the experiences of their ancestors tie directly into the city's history.

In the early 1920s in San Francisco Henry's American mother met and soon married his father Albert Francis Ollerdessen, a businessman traveling between New York City, San Francisco, and Shanghai.[9] His European ancestors traveled to China years before the establishment of the foreign settlements in Chinese port cities. Albert's Eurasian family epitomizes the types of early encounters between Westerners and Chinese along China's coast. Gloria's family history further reveals the

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[6] Greg Leck, *Captives of Empire: The Japanese Internment of Allied Civilians in China, 1941-1945* (Bangor, PA: Shandy Press, 2006), 585.

[7] "Enlisted Record and Report of Separation Honorable Discharge," 1951, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood.

[8] Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai,* 1.

[9] *The China Who's Who ... (Foreign).* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1924), 197.

interconnectedness of China's Eurasian families. Gloria's family lived in Shanghai predating the International Settlement's 1863 origins and Gloria, her parents, and all four of her grandparents connect to European and Chinese ancestors. On the one hand, their stories represent the ongoing cultural encounters between Westerners and Chinese during the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Gloria's family, like Shanghai itself, "became the place of the initial meeting of Chinese and Western thought and culture."[10] On the other hand, the lives and experiences of Gloria's Eurasian ancestors demonstrate the limits of Shanghai's cosmopolitism and the segregation and discrimination faced by Chinese and some Eurasians. Furthermore, the experiences of Eurasians in China illustrate how class, gender, and many other factors, in addition to their mixed cultural background, shaped their lives and opportunities.

Individuals referred to as Eurasian, due to their Chinese and European ancestry, may have never referred to themselves by the term or even connected with their mixed background. The term "Eurasian" is used as early as 1878 to refer to "the offspring of a European father and an Asiatic mother" and the term is further used to describe individuals of European and Asian ancestry.[11] The historical definition reveals the gender dynamics rooted in the view of Eurasians in nineteenth-century China, as there is no acknowledgement of individuals born to an Asian fathers and European mothers. Reflecting on Hong Kong Eurasian family history, author Peter Hall compares Eurasian

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[10] Michael Knight, Dany Chan, and Nancy Zeng Berliner, eds., *Shanghai: Art of the City* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture, 2010), 47.

[11] Giles A. Herbert, *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East* (Messrs. Lane, Crawford &Co., Messrs. Kelly & Walsh., Messrs. Trubner & Co., 1878), 39.

families to a banyan tree, invoking the image of interconnecting branches and roots.[12] Gloria and Henry's family histories are similarly entangled. For example, decades before their births, two of their Eurasian ancestors married. Henry's grand-aunt Clara Cooke and Gloria's grand-uncle Augustus William White married each other in Shanghai, uniting two Shanghai Eurasian families. Research into most Eurasian families from this era necessitates the exploration of many threads and familial connections. Marriages between Eurasians like Clara and Augustus or Gloria and Henry produced many life stories affected by Shanghai's cosmopolitanism and their mixed cultural backgrounds.

Ancestral history is the lens through which the history of Shanghai Eurasians can be viewed. The use of ancestral history in this article is like the methodological approach of historian Kirsty Walker who researches Eurasian history in the colonial city of Penang in Malaysia, then British Malaya. Walker explains that "by exploring those interwoven histories...it is possible to map out interactions that shaped their lives. Tracing the interactions across ethnic and cultural lines within Eurasian homes, reveals the complex interplay of syncretism, assimilation, conflict, and tension that found their way into their family histories."[13] Like Walker, to provide a more organized and fluid story, this article is guided by ancestral history. Additional biographies, including those of the siblings and relatives of my direct ancestors provide a more complete picture of the lives and experiences of the primary case studies. Similarly, the more well-documented and preserved histories of Eurasians assist the exploration of Eurasian experiences in China.

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[12] Peter Hall, *In the Web* (Birkenhead, U.K.: Appin Press, 2012), xvi.

[13] Kirsty Walker, "Intimate Interactions: Eurasian Family Histories in Colonial Penang," *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 2 (March 2012): 313.

To avoid confusion of individuals of the same family name, family members are referred to by their given names after their introduction. For example, Gloria Roberts is referred to as Gloria to avoid confusion with her father Frank Roberts and other Roberts family members. Family trees provide an additional guide in connecting the various individuals mentioned in the article and a family tree is provided for each chapter. (Figures 1-7) The names of individuals presented vary according to their historical record and cultural background. For example, some individuals are only known by the name passed down by their ancestors, as they do not appear in any primary historical sources. In addition, Chinese characters are given for individuals' names, when known. "Google Translate" and "Hong Kong Vision" provide the romanization of Chinese names. If the individual operated in a Cantonese environment and had a Cantonese name, Cantonese translations are used. Overall, every effort is made to present each case study in as much detail as the historical record allows. The lives of many individuals of Eurasian ancestry are largely lost to history and many of the lives explored are limited by a scant historical record. However, as Teng explains, "as the Chinese Eurasians of a bygone era have faded from the scene there has arisen something, phoenix-like, to take their place: memory. Memory to take the place of silence."[14]

By the mid-nineteenth century Shanghai consisted of three separate regions, the International Settlement, the French Concession, and the remaining Chinese city, including the formerly walled city or Nanshi district. Foreign settlement in Shanghai began through armed conflict and foreign presence in the city remained tenuous

[14] Teng, *Eurasian,* 257.

throughout the existence of the International Settlement and French Concession. Shanghai before the establishment of the foreign settlements, historian James Hayes asserts, "flourished as a port-town" from the southern Song (960-1279) into the Yuan (1271-1368), "but as in many of the coastal cities, there was stagnation for much of the Ming, owing to the long-prevailing, though not always effective, ban on overseas trade."[15] The Qing dynasty (1636-1912) continued the ban and for decades limited overseas trade to the port city of Guangzhou, at the time referred to by the British as Canton. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the British empire increasingly sought to expand trade activities in China. Through a conflict known as the Opium Wars the British achieved their goal and, in the process, Shanghai, which became one of the treaty-port concessions granted to European powers in the wake of these wars, grew in population and significance. Indeed, Bickers contends that "war made Shanghai."[16]

The governing Qing dynasty controlled trade with foreign nations and attempted to ban the production and importation of opium, a highly addictive drug. Bickers argues the inciting incident of the Opium Wars occurred when Qing forces attacked British merchant ships and took British hostages. Bickers states, "the war decision was taken not to enforce an illegal trade...but to secure redress for insult - the holding of the Canton British hostage for their opium stocks, and the holding of the Crown's representative."[17] Nonetheless, interested in expanding their economic influence in China the British took

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[15] James W Hayes, "Fertile and Fortunate: Shanghai Before the Treaty Port Era," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch, 48 (2021): 180.

[16] Robert A. Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832 - 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 130.

[17] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 81.

advantage of the situation, using force to ensure open trading markets. Historian Jonathan Spence explains how the Qing managed foreign trade, writing that "the Qing state had no Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Relations with non-Chinese peoples were instead conducted by a variety of bureaus and agencies that, in different ways, implied or stated the cultural inferiority and geographical marginality of foreigners, while also defending the state against them."[18] Despite their efforts British technology overwhelmed Qing forces, as historian Marie-Claire Bergère describes, "the enormous technical progress achieved in the fields of transport, armaments, and industrial production provided the Westerners with the means to impose upon China the opening up that they had been clamoring for and that China was refusing them." Bergère contends broader economic goals led to the Opium Wars and that "the principal objective of the First Opium War, which broke out in 1839, was precisely to force China to recognize and accept the new capitalist order of the world." While Bickers may put more stock into the British reactionary response to attacks on their merchant ships, both scholars recognize securing access to trade along the Chinese coast as the primary objective of the British during the Opium Wars. The British aimed to open new trading markets for the exportation of tea to Europe and the importation of yarn and cotton to China.[19] Detailing the events of the Opium Wars, Bickers reports that attacks by colonial forces in Shanghai in 1842 allowed foreign ships to navigate and eventually control the lower Yangtze River. Attacks along the Yangtze facilitated a British military victory over Qing forces, ending the conflict and leading to

[18] Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China,* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 115.

[19] Marie-Claire Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity,* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2009), 17-19.

the signing of the Treaty of Nanking.[20] The stipulations of the treaty not only transformed relations between China and the West but also authorized foreign settlement in China. The Treaty of Nanking specified the terms of economic engagement between China and Britain, including the opening of five port cities along the Chinese coast to foreign trade and settlement. In addition to Guangzhou, the treaty allowed foreign trade in Amoy (Xiamen), Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningpo (Ningbo), and Shanghai. The opening of more accessible ports to foreign trade advantaged other Western colonial powers eager to expand trade in the region. In addition to establishing new trade markets, the treaty provided the citizens of the "treaty-signing powers," Britain and later the United States and France, the privilege of extraterritoriality, which according to Bickers meant, "they were outside Chinese legal jurisdiction, subject only to the laws of their homelands and the authority of their consuls and diplomats."[21] By the early twentieth century Chinese leaders, including Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong, referred to the Treaty of Nanking and subsequent treaties with Western powers as the "unequal treaties" as commentary on how the treaties impacted China.[22]

The first foreign individuals to arrive and settle in Shanghai had trouble securing land and lodgings. Negotiations with local Chinese officials led to "a formal setting aside of space for British use" in land regulations with Shanghai officials and "as all land in China belonged to the emperor it could not be sold to the foreigners…a procedural fiction

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[20] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 84.

[21] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 5.

[22] Dong Wang, "The Discourse of Unequal Treaties in Modern China," *Pacific Affairs* 76, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 28.

was inaugurated, and the land was rented in perpetuity from its owners."[23] Of the initial five "treaty ports" open to trade, according to Spence, only Shanghai became a "boom town." Shanghai transformed in the first few years after it opened to foreign settlement, as Spence reports, "by 1850, with the land drained and the river banks shored up, there were over 100 merchants in residence there."[24] Foreign residents employed in import and export businesses settled in the region established for foreigners, forming social and economic institutions. The foreign community, initially mostly British, built gardens, churches, cemeteries, and a racetrack within the first five years of settlement.[25] As the foreign population grew and new industries developed, Chinese migrants settled in the region as well, some following the British merchants from Guangzhou and others from across China seeking new opportunities. By the turn of the twentieth century, Shanghai overtook Guangzhou as the most significant place of encounter between Chinese and Westerners in China.

The growing community of foreign residents in Shanghai developed an identity reflecting their position in the city. Many Westerners considered their stay in Shanghai temporary and planned on returning to their countries of origin. Some on the other hand came to identify with the locale and community they helped build. Bergère asserts before World War I, "even as they loudly proclaimed their allegiance to this or that national or confessional group, the foreigners were beginning to feel a certain attachment to this port

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[23] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 95-96.

[24] Spence, *The Search for Modern China,* 162.

[25] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 97.

in which their establishment was becoming increasingly stable."[26] The emerging connection with the land allowed for the development of a more settled community. Bickers reports "in 1870 there were 1,666 foreign residents in the Settlement at Shanghai, men outnumbering women six to one, and there were 167 children. By 1895 there were 1,389 children and 3,295 foreign adults, with a much more balanced ratio of men to women (1.7 to 1)."[27] The foreign population, initially consisting of mostly men planning on a temporary visit, transformed into a community of families, many planning on living in the region permanently. Bergère points out that the trials they faced helped foster a sense of community, writing, "the 'old Shanghai hands' or 'Shanghailanders', as they were beginning to call themselves, were not ideologues, but their attachment to Shanghai and identification with it grew ever stronger as they rose to challenges of the difficult environment and created the conditions for a privileged existence."[28] Bickers notes while the Shanghailander identity is rooted in the "whiteness" of the European settlers and opposition to the Chinese population, European heritage alone did not constitute a Shanghailander. The identity of Shanghailanders developed in opposition to not only non-Europeans but also the temporary European residents. Shanghailander identity remained a mostly British, "local, imagined identity" particular to the foreign settlement

[26] Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity,* 85.

[27] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 311.

[28] Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity,* 98.

in Shanghai.[29] The local identity among the population further set Shanghai apart from the other treaty port cities.

The International Settlement in Shanghai existed only due to the unrelenting attempts by colonial powers to establish trade with China. And, foreign presence in Shanghai could not be ignored by its Chinese residents. "The British influence was manifest in the rhythm of daily activities, the organization of the living environment, the development of leisure occupations and sport, and the use of English as lingua franca of the foreign communities," writes Bergère.[30] Historian Wen-Hsin Yeh notes that "tension between the foreign and the domestic was prominent in the material transformation of Chinese lives in Shanghai."[31] And yet despite the foreign presence and special privileges of foreign residents, the relationship between the Chinese and the foreigners in Shanghai is not defined by historians of modern China as colonial. Despite the strong influence of foreigners in Shanghai during this era, the city remained fundamentally Chinese. Even within the 8.66 square mile International Settlement, by 1935 foreign residents were outnumbered by Chinese residents by roughly 35,000 to 1 million.[32] Historian Joshua Fogel dismisses the label of Shanghai as even "semi-colonial," noting that, "while westerners in the city did enjoy extraterritoriality, they had little authority outside the

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[29] Robert Bickers, "Shanghailanders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937," *Past & Present*, no. 159 (1998): 164.

[30] Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity,* 86.

[31] Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1843-1949, (*Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007), 71.

[32] Richard Feetham, *Report of the Hon. Richard Feetham, C.M.G., Judge of the Supreme Court of the Union of South Africa to the Shanghai Municipal Council.* (Shanghai: North-China Daily News and Herald, 1931), 20.

Concessions, and the Chinese population of Shanghai was always many times larger than all the foreign communities combined. In addition, numerous Chinese owned property and lived in the Concessions, making this whole topic much more satisfyingly complex than any easy appellation might afford."[33] Yeh agrees the colonial orientation of the foreigners did not engulf Shanghai or its Chinese residents, stating "the foreign concessions, despite (or because) of their constantly expanding boundaries, were never capable of keeping 'China' out of Shanghai; nor the Chinese out of concession affairs. Shanghai was characterized by the ceaseless contentions between opposing forces that sought to shape the city according to their diverging projects."[34]

In the mid-1930s, American sociologist Herbert Day Lamson reported on the Eurasian population in Shanghai concluding that Eurasians faced social discrimination from both the Chinese and foreign communities. The discrimination originated, according to Lamson, from a "traditional stigma of illegitimacy."[35] Resistance to interracial marriages led to discreetly maintained relationships. The stigma drove many Eurasians to hide their mixed backgrounds. The history of Eurasians in Shanghai is obscured because of the prejudice they endured. As Teng explains, "for years, untold numbers of interracial families hid their origins out of shame and a desire to belong. In the words of one Hong

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[33] Joshua A Fogel, "The Recent Boom in Shanghai Studies," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 2 (2010): 318.

[34] Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor,* 5.

[35] Herbert Day Lamson, "The Eurasian in Shanghai," *American Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 5 (March 1936): 642, https://doi.org/10.1086/217261.

Kong Eurasian, 'We were told solemnly not to disclose these family secrets to anyone.'"[36]

First presented are the descendants of Albert Francis Ollerdessen and his most well-documented grandparents, the British Colonel and veteran of the Taiping Rebellion, James Edward Cooke and his wife Mary Akum Sage. Following is the story of Albert's Eurasian parents Louisa Cooke and Henry Ollerdessen, a couple born in Ningbo who later settled and married in Shanghai. Next is an examination of Gloria's two Eurasian parents whose family histories contrast in many ways. The story of her mother Clara Talbot, born to Eurasian parents and prominent members of Shanghai's foreign community, reveals the opportunities made available to wealthy Eurasians while also showcasing the limits individuals faced due to their mixed backgrounds. Gloria's father Frank Roberts, born in Hong Kong, like many Eurasians in China, may have not known the identity of his ancestors, including his father. His mysterious background is representative of the many Eurasians in China estranged from their European ancestors. Each case study brings to light how their mixed cultural backgrounds affected Eurasians' lives in Shanghai and China's treaty ports cities.

1. Mary Sage and James Cooke

In addition to Shanghai, in the aftermath of the Opium Wars foreigners settled in the other treaty port cities opened to trade and settlement. Historical records provide limited information on the intimate relationships that developed between Europeans and

[36] Teng, *Eurasian,* 22.

Chinese as foreigners settled on the Chinese coast. In the case of Mary Akum Sage historical records provide a glimpse into her Eurasian origins. The will of her father, a European man named William Vincent Sage, sheds light on the life he made in Hong Kong and his relationship with Mary's mother, a Chinese woman only known in the historical record as Atong. The will also indicates that in Hong Kong Atong and William had a child together. William stipulates in his will that the executors shall administer the "estate on behalf of one Chinese woman named, 'Atong' and a little girl named 'Akum', to share my property as long as they live."[37] Joyce Bradbury, a descendant of 'Akum', tells her life story and her family's history in *Forgiven but not Forgotten: Memoirs of a Teenage Girl Prisoner of the Japanese in China.* Bradbury writes that William worked as a ship-owner, and that his daughter, referenced in the will as 'Akum' was called Mary.[38] Historical records do not indicate when Atong or William arrived in Hong Kong. Teng reports that compared with other Chinese cities, in Hong Kong the color line was strictly upheld.[39] It is likely Atong and William faced discrimination. In his will, William expresses discontent with the British by explicitly stating he wishes the British government would not interfere with the execution of his will. William writes that despite being born a "Britisher…I made all my personal and private property from the Americans

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[37] "William Vincent Sage" (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - Government Records Service, 1855), HKRS144-4 Probate Jurisdiction Will Files, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - Government Records Service, https://search.grs.gov.hk/en/arcview.xhtml?q=william+vincent+sage&eid=DEFmkx3ROwA2%2FstiqL1Thw%3D%3D&ls=e_k%3D0%26q%3Dwilliam%2Bvincent%2Bsage%26rpp%3D10#.

[38] Joyce Bradbury, *Forgiven but Not Forgotten: Memoirs of a Teenage Girl Prisoner of the Japanese in China* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: J. Bradbury, 2000), 8.

[39] Teng, *Eurasian*, 206.

alone." He names two men, George L. Haskell and James Keenan, to execute his will and afford all his property to Atong and Mary.[40] The record does not describe the nature of the relationship between Atong and William, nor does it state his reasoning for distrusting the British government. Bestowing his property to a Chinese woman it is probable William worried how this action would be viewed by the British colonial government. It is not certain if Atong or Mary indeed inherited William's estate and the life and the fate of Atong remains a mystery. By the 1860s, her daughter Mary moved from Hong Kong to the Chinese port city of Ningbo.

A descendant of Mary writes she was born in "Soochow", now known as Suzhou.[41] Located to the west of Shanghai, Suzhou "was famous in eighteenth-century China as a center of the silk- and cotton-cloth trades."[42] Like other British businessmen, Mary's father William may have traveled between the treaty port cities opened to British trade and settlement under the stipulations of the Treaty of Nanking. Another possibility of how Mary arrived in the city is that her mother Atong also came from Suzhou and returned from Hong Kong to her family to have her child. In *My Upside-Down World,* Mary's great-granddaughter Madeline Poston writes that American missionaries raised Mary.[43] Christian missionaries from Europe and the United States proselytized in China for many years, however as Spence reports, missionary work increased after the signing

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[40] "William Vincent Sage."

[41] Madeleine Poston, *My Upside-Down World* (Portland, Or.: Benneta Pub., 2002), 52.

[42] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 91.

[43] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 52.

of the Treaty of Nanking as it provided British and Americans sites for the construction of "hospitals, churches, and cemeteries."[44] In addition to spreading a religious message, Christian missionaries offered care and services to the Chinese. Christian missionaries faced scrutiny in many parts of China. Spence notes how missionaries had to lure students with offers of free food and other goods.[45] Some missionaries established schools and orphanages. Hall writes many Christian orphanages raised Eurasian children in China, "as children of mixed parents left by the father, [who] would either be cared for by the 'wife's' family, usually the maternal grandmother, or placed in a home."[46] Records do not state how Mary came to be raised by American missionaries. Mary had her own children baptized Catholic, suggesting Mary may have been raised by Catholic missionaries. Poston describes Mary as speaking, "very good English, and play[ing] the piano...She was known in the family as Abu, which is the Chinese word for maternal grandmother. She always wore traditional Chinese clothing and hair pulled back in a tight bun."[47] Poston's description of Mary suggests she may have identified or presented herself as Chinese. The author references Mary as a Chinese woman perhaps revealing that Mary's British background may not have been known by her family. In 1864 Mary gave birth to her first child in Ningbo, a treaty port city north of Hong Kong and less than two hundred miles south of Shanghai.

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[44] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 160.

[45] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 199.

[46] Hall, *In the Web*, 27.

[47] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 52-55.

Between 1864 and 1879 Mary raised eight children in Ningbo with a British man named James Edward Cooke.[48] Before arriving in China, the British colonial empire shaped nearly all aspects of James Cooke's life. Bradbury writes that James "was born in Jamaica, the son of a planter."[49] If the Cooke family indeed worked as planters in Jamaica, it is likely they profited from the slave trade. Beginning in the mid to late seventeenth century the British maintained the island of Jamaica as a colony. They profited by forcibly importing Africans to work as slave laborers and exporting sugar, rum, and coffee. The British empire did not abolish the practice of slavery in its colonies until 1833, two years before the birth of James.[50] James likely spent his formative years in England, baptized at the St. Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol.[51] As a young adult James took to the sea joining the British Royal Navy.[52] In 1855, he earned a "certificate of competency...by the lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade," signed by officers of the British Naval Department. He received the colonial award from a committee originally called the Lords of Trade and Plantations.[53] At the age of twenty-two, James "became master of a vessel owned by King & Co, an African Gold Coast

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[48] Joyce Bradbury, "Cooke Family History", (private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood).

[49] Bradbury, *Forgiven but Not Forgotten*, 5.

[50] "Slavery Abolition" (Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive, August 7, 1833), 25815, Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive, link.gale.com/apps/doc/DS0103715932/SAS?u=csuh_main&sid=bookmark-SAS&xid=56c03865&pg=3.

[51] "Bristol, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1918," digital image s.v. "James Edward Cook", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[52] Bradbury, *Forgiven but Not Forgotten*, 5.

[53] "UK and Ireland, Masters and Mates Certificates, 1850-1927," digital image s.v. "James Edward Cooke", http://www.Ancestry.com.

exploration company."[54] After the abolition of the slave trade by the British, the main exports from the Gulf of Guinea were gold, ivory, cotton, coffee, palm oil, and other agricultural products.[55] James only spent a few years as a maritime trader. Five years after receiving the colonial award and in his mid-twenties, James traveled to China where he took part in the Taiping Rebellion.

The Taiping Rebellion began as a Christian-inspired political movement in opposition to Qing rule in China. Hong Xiuquan led the rebellion and in 1851, "assembled his God worshippers and declared himself the Heavenly King of the Taiping Tianguo, 'Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace' (commonly abbreviated to Taiping)." Hong's rebellion garnered enough support to wage a real struggle with the Qing and the Taiping ruled over parts of China for eleven years.[56] Spence describes how the Taiping Rebellion grew, "drawing recruits from Hakka and Miao minority groups, from secret societies, from pirates driven inland by British patrol vessels jealously guarding the new treaty ports, from impoverished miners and peasants, and from the drifting population on the waterways, unemployed now that the focus of the opium trade had swung from Canton up to the Shanghai and the Yangtze valley." The civil war between Qing forces and the Taiping rebels took place initially in inland China. At first, Westerners in China maintained neutrality, however they might have been intrigued by the possibilities of a

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[54] Bradbury, *Forgiven but Not Forgotten*, 5.

[55] Edward Reynolds, "Agricultural Adjustments on the Gold Coast after the End of the Slave Trade, 1807-1874," *Agricultural History* 47, no. 4 (1973): 308–18.

[56] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 170-172.

Christian Chinese ruler.[57] However, by 1853 Shanghai fell to Taiping forces, challenging the assumed safety of the foreigners living in China.[58] Additionally, Taiping control of port cities endangered Western trade in the region. Spence writes foreigners "initially excited by the prospect of a Christian revolutionary force" in China grew to fear the "eccentricities" of Hong's values and policies. Taiping opposition to opium threatened Western economic interests in China.[59] In 1860, Western powers in Shanghai formed an international coalition force, later named the "Ever Victorious Army" by the Chinese, to assist the Qing battling the Taiping.

James arrived in China amidst the Taiping Rebellion and joined the forces of General Frederick Townsend Ward's "Ever Victorious Army." For over a decade the Qing fought Taiping rebel forces. Nineteenth-century author Andrew Wilson covers foreign involvement in the conflict in his 1868 work, *The "Ever-Victorious Army" A History of The Chinese Campaign Under Lt.-Col. C.G. Gordon, C.B. R.E. and of the Suppression of the Tai-Ping Rebellion*. Wilson writes in 1860 Qing officials in Shanghai appealed to British and French authorities for assistance in defending the city against the Taiping forces. In a "despatch" to the Foreign Secretary Lord John Russell, British diplomat Frederick Bruce conveys the colonial perspective of the Taiping Rebellion writing on May 30, 1860: "it appeared to me that, without taking any part in this civil contest, or expressing any opinion on the rights of the parties, we might protect Shanghai

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[57] Jonathan D. Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960* (Boston, MA: Little, Browm and Company, 1969), 58-59.

[58] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 127.

[59] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 172.

from attack, and assist the authorities in preserving tranquility within its walls, on the ground of its being a port open to trade, and of the intimate connection existing between the interests of the town and of the Foreign settlement"[60] The British and European traders viewed Shanghai as an increasingly important port city for international trade. China's imports from Britain steadily increased in the 1850s, "from less than 1 million British pounds in 1854 to 4.5 million in 1860."[61] Wilson contends that while Ward formed the "Ever Victorious Army" it was under the leadership of Colonel Charles Gordon that the unit truly earned its name. According to his obituary, James served in the "Ever Victorious Army" under both Ward and Gordon. His obituary, published in *The North China Herald*, notes that "after the death of Ward, Major Cooke was engaged constantly at the front, driving the Rebels from city to city till their final overthrow at Hangchow [Hangzhou]. For a time, he was in full command of the Anglo-Chinese Contingent at Song-yue city...He also fought under Colonel Gordon throughout his campaign in the Kiangsu [Jiangsu] province, when he earned the merit rank of Colonel."[62]

James served in a military brigade that represented the early cosmopolitan nature of colonialism in China. Wilson notes in the "Ever Victorious Army", "the commissioned officers were all Foreigners - Englishmen, Americans, Germans, Frenchmen, and

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[60] Andrew Wilson, *The "Ever-Victorious Army" A History of The Chinese Campaign Under Lt.-Col. C.G. Gordon, C.B. R.E. and of the Suppression of the Tai-Ping Rebellion* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1868), 61.

[61] Wolfgang Keller, Ben Li, and Carol H Shiue, "Shanghai's Trade, China's Growth: Continuity, Recovery, and Change since the Opium Wars," *IMF Economic Review* 61, no. 2 (2013): 336–78, https://doi.org/10.1057/imfer.2013.10, 342.

[62] "Death of Colonel Cooke," *The North China Herald*, March 1, 1881.

Spaniards, but Americans were in the majority...The non-commissioned officers were all Chinese." And like the segregation that would develop between Europeans and Chinese in Shanghai, the "Ever Victorious Army" discriminated against its Chinese members by not allowing them to move up the ranks. Providing a picture into the daily experiences of James while serving in the "Ever Victorious Army" Wilson further describes its members: "among them were to be found many seafaring men...As a rule they were brave, reckless, very quick in adapting themselves to circumstances, and reliable in action; but, on the other hand, they were troublesome when in garrison, very touchy as to precedence, and apt to work themselves about trifles into violent states of mind."[63] James served in the "Ever Victorious Army" from his arrival in China until the end of the Taiping Rebellion in the mid-1860s. His obituary states that James, was "indelibly associated with the history of the troublous time experienced in this part of China during the Taiping rebellion."[64] James settled in the city of Ningbo where he continued to serve for sixteen years as Brigadier of a local militia formed by the British to protect their interests in the port city.[65] James commanded a force of 200 British and Chinese men. Author Robert Nield writes that Ningbo city authorities funded James' forces and "their barracks and much-used parade ground (the soldiers were 'perfect in their drill') was just inside the city's Salt Gate. They acted for many years as a semi-official defensive

[63] Wilson, *The "Ever-Victorious Army"*, 127.

[64] "Death of Colonel Cooke."

[65] Bradbury, *Forgiven but Not Forgotten*, 7.

army."[66] The website "Historical Photographs of China" archives two photographs dating from 1878-1880 capturing James and his military unit. The first image (Figure 9) features the soldiers under the command of James in Ningbo and the second image (Figure 10) presents James in his uniform. His longevity as leader of a combined foreign and Chinese military group suggests his ability to navigate the different cultural backgrounds of his troops. Historical records do not detail James' leadership style, however his obituary states that he was, "a gentleman well known and highly respected by a large circle of foreign friends and native officials."[67]

Figure 9 (left) "Col. Cook's [i.e. Cooke's] soldiers – Ningpo", 1878-1880, Ningbo, Edward Bangs Drew Collection, Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University, https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/hv37-84

Figure 10 (right) "Col. Cooke, Ningpo", 1878-1880, Ningbo, Edward Bangs Drew Collection, Harvard-Yenching Library of Harvard College Library, Harvard University, https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/hv37-83

James was not the only foreign officer in China to develop a relationship with a Chinese woman. Ward, the founder of the "Ever Victorious Army", and Robert Hart another foreigner who arrived in China during the Taiping Rebellion each further

[66] Robert Nield, "Ningpo," in *China's Foreign Places: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840–1943* (Hong Kong University Press, 2015), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt17w8gkt.53, 177.

[67] "Death of Colonel Cooke."

showcase the range of cultural encounters during this era. Born in Ireland, Hart arrived in China in 1854. He traveled to China as a British diplomat working in customs and by the mid-1860s served the Qing as the "inspector-general of the Imperial Maritime Customs." Spence reports that "Hart…as a young man in the Ningbo and Canton of the 1850s had kept a Chinese mistress who bore him three children." Quoting Hart, Spence continues, "it was 'a common practice for unmarried Englishmen resident in China to keep a Chinese girl,' he wrote later in a confidential legal deposition, 'and I did as others did.'"[68] Teng agrees with Hart's assessment that "to keep a Chinese girl" was common, describing Hart's actions as done "in true colonial fashion."[69] Hart's attitudes about his relationship reflect the sentiment of many European men in China. Hart did not hide his relationship with a Chinese woman and in fact, he "was famous throughout China for his rigid, efficient and incorruptible Customs Service almost as much as his personal brass brand [band], Chinese mistress and their numerous children."[70] Teng further adds that in 1864 when in Beijing Hart expected to "receive Chinese rank", however a Qing official suggested he first marry a Chinese woman to "strengthen the foreigner's ties to China." Hart refused even when the official suggested his daughter as a marriage partner. Hart's willingness to bear children with a Chinese mistress and yet his resistance to marry a Chinese woman reflects the negative view many colonial men held of Chinese women. On the other hand, as Teng notes, the account reveals the Qing government's seeming

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[68] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 201.

[69] Teng, *Eurasian*, 64.

[70] Paul French, "The International Settlement A-Z," in *The Old Shanghai A-Z* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 115, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24hkx0.11.

acceptance of interracial marriage, especially if the marriage "could serve to secure their foreign servants' allegiance."[71] Hart's actions epitomize the colonial assumption of European superiority and power over non-Europeans. While many Europeans developed intimate and meaningful relationships with Chinese people, racist, patriarchal, and colonial ideology dominated. Hart's colonial attitude is further evident by his mistreatment of his mistress, a Cantonese woman named Ayaou. Hart paid Ayaou a sum of money, shipped their children to school in England, and left China to later return with a British wife. Bickers considers Hart's actions toward Ayaou as not only "routine" but a "cliche of the colonial novel."[72]

Ward, the founder of the "Ever Victorious Army" arrived in Shanghai about a year before James and joined the defense against the Taiping Rebellion. Describing Ward, Spence writes that while many Westerners in China at the time were businessmen or missionaries, "there were also men who simply had a love of travel and excitement in their bones, adventurers who roamed the world to take what it would give."[73] Spence's description of Ward could just as aptly apply to James. Unaffiliated with any trading business or religious organization, Ward and James' travels to China likely arose from a yearning for adventure. Unlike Hart, Ward married a Chinese woman in part to solidify his allegiance to the Qing. Teng reports in 1862 Ward married Yang Zhangmei, a daughter of a powerful banker, cementing his loyalty to the Yang family and China. After

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[71] Teng, *Eurasian*, 64.

[72] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 224.

[73] Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*, 57.

being honored with the "position of fourth-rank Mandarin" Ward also became a Chinese citizen.[74] Spence notes "communication between bride and groom must have proved difficult, since Taki [Yang Fang] knew only 'pidgin' English and his daughter probably knew none at all, while Ward had only a smattering of spoken Chinese and knew nothing of the written characters." The description of the cultural encounter between Ward and Yang after their marriage is representative of other cross-cultural unions in which partners initially could not fully understand each other's language. Spence contends that Ward married Yang as a "practical step…to bind himself closer to the Chinese and to gain direct financial backing from his father-in-law."[75] Before the success of the "Ever Victorious Army," Ward quarreled with foreign officials in Shanghai about his involvement in assisting the Qing government. Wilson reports that "they arrested Ward and some of his men on the 19th May, and took him to Shanghai, where he was tried as an American citizen illegally engaged in operations of war, but avoided jurisdiction by disavowing his country and claiming Chinese nationality."[76] Spence writes Ward's loyalty to China not only improved his relations with Chinese but also foreigners. Further complicating colonial attitudes about the Chinese, Spence writes that Ward, "by becoming 'Chinese' his status in the foreign community increased enormously. By the summer of 1862, this restless ex-first-mate, gold-miner and soldier of fortune could mix not only with the high level of Chinese officialdom, but with foreign consuls, merchants,

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[74] Teng, *Eurasian*, 64.

[75] Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*, 70.

[76] Wilson, *The "Ever-Victorious Army"*, 71-72.

and ministers."[77] Ward's connections with Chinese individuals increased his usefulness to Westerners. His identity and loyalty to China stemmed in part from his service to the land and people, the alliances he built with Chinese individuals, and his marriage to Yang. Ward's "becoming Chinese" further uncovers the diversity of Western experience in China.

Ward's loyalty to China and its people certainly stands in contrast with Hart. Ward's "Ever Victorious Army" may have ultimately been formed to protect Western economic interests, but it also helped the Qing defeat the Taiping rebels. Ward's marriage with Yang may have been a strategic union but he openly married a Chinese woman at a time when many of his European peers abhorred interracial marriages. Wilson notes that when news of Ward's death in battle "reached Sungkiang [Songjiang], he was deeply lamented, all the shopkeepers at once shut their shops for the day; several officers of the British army and navy attended his funeral; the usual volleys for a general were fired over his grave, and he was buried in the Confucian University, which the Chinese considered a great honour."[78] Ward built real alliances and relationships with Chinese individuals. Hart and Ward's interactions in China show the variety of cultural encounters that occurred between Europeans and Chinese. These encounters usually concerned business and Western interest in trade with China. Alliances and relationships developed from the business dealings, government negotiations, and the many incidental encounters that followed. Hart shows how colonial ideologies of patriarchy and racism affected intimate

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[77] Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*, 72.

[78] Wilson, *The "Ever-Victorious Army"*, 90.

relationships between Europeans and Chinese. Ward and James reveal how many of these relationships might have overcome the obstacles of colonial attitudes and cultural differences to form true and lasting bonds.

During the early 1860s Mary and James met and began a relationship. It is unclear whether Mary and James maintained a public marriage or relationship together. However, the passage of time between the birth of their first and last children suggests Mary and James maintained a continuous affiliation. Several of their children were either born or eventually settled in Shanghai. James had no family in the region and records do not demonstrate Mary's connection with her family in China or Europe. Born to a Eurasian mother and a British father in China, the Cooke children may have identified themselves as Eurasian. At least three of the Cooke children married fellow Eurasians in Shanghai.[79] Clearly, Eurasian families in the treaty ports were interconnected, reminiscent of Hall's metaphor of Hong Kong Eurasian families forming a web or the roots and branches of a "banyan tree."[80] James' obituary does not mention the mother of his children and historical records do not reveal when Mary passed away. The details of the negotiations and discussions, influenced in part by their cultural differences, between Mary and James are unknown. Their life together is representative of the many mixed-race relationships that developed during this era whose details are lost to time.

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[79] In 1884 Mary and James' daughter Louisa married Henry Ollerdessen, a Eurasian man also born in Ningbo. ("Marriage Announcement 1," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette (1870-1941)*, May 8, 1885, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.) John Edward, the grandfather of the author Bradbury, married Mary Steglich of Danish and Chinese parents. And Mary and James' daughter Clara married Augustus William White, the eldest son of a prominent Shanghai Eurasian family. ("Cooke Family History")

[80] Hall, *In the Web*, xvi.

2. Louisa Cooke and Henry Ollerdessen

The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette reported on May 8, 1885, the marriage of Henry Ollerdessen to Louisa Cooke "the second daughter of the late Col. Cooke of the Anglo-Chinese Contingent."[81] Family records designate Henry's father as European and his mother as Chinese but much of his background remains unconfirmed. Poston writes Henry's father, Henryk, left Europe in the 1830s as a young man, spending time in California "attempting to get rich in the gold fields before coming to the Far East in 1860."[82] However, Henry's passport application from 1912 lists his father as an American citizen and Henry claimed to be an American citizen despite having "never lived in the United States."[83] Perhaps his father Henryk was born in the United States or became a citizen in his years living in the country. Once in China, Henryk had two children with a Chinese woman who Poston does not identify by name. Henry was born in Ningbo in 1862. Most of the information about Henry's parents is limited to the notes and stories passed down by his descendants. The historical record does not provide further insight into the relationship between Henryk and the woman referred to as "Chinese lady" on her descendants' family tree.[84] Poston reports Henry "was educated in the Thomas Hanbury School for Boys," a school for Eurasian children

[81] "Marriage Announcement 1."

[82] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 55.

[83] "U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925," digital image s.v. "Henry Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[84] Madeline Poston, "Family Tree", (private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood).

established when he was seven years old.[85] Likely one of the school's first pupils, Henry attended the newly established school for Eurasian children in Shanghai.

American missionary and author Pott writes that as early as the 1860s within the International Settlement in Shanghai attention was "directed towards the needs of children of mixed parentage, Eurasians, who were left without means of securing an education." An 1869 article in *The North-China Herald* points "out the necessity of providing boarding schools for this class, so that the fact of their mixed parentage might not be a handicap to them in competition with pure whites."[86] Shortly after the publication of the article, a school for Eurasian children opened in Shanghai referred to as the Shanghai Eurasian School or the Thomas Hanbury School. Two Americans living in Shanghai established the school. The philanthropist and botanist Thomas Hanbury, the school's namesake, provided a ten-room house, and Christian missionary Catherine Bonney ran the school. *Shanghai: A Handbook for Travellers and Residents,* published in 1920, notes "the Thomas Hanbury Home: is a little lower down on the Boone Road, and was founded by Mr. Thomas Hanbury for the education of Eurasian children, both boys and girls."[87] Teng explains that "the school's mission was premised on the belief that Eurasian children should be educated 'as nearly up to the European standard as possible,' yet segregated from 'Europeans of pure blood.'"[88]

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[85] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 55.

[86] Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai,* 119.

[87] Charles Ewart Darwent, *Shanghai. A Handbook for Travellers and Residents* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1920), https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Asset/Source/bnBook_ID-1260_No-1.pdf, 47.

[88] Teng, *Eurasian*, 158.

Both Hanbury and Bonney traveled extensively and began living in China in the mid-1850s. Their records provide further perspective on their reasoning for opening a school for Eurasian children in Shanghai. In a letter to his father dated "16th June 1871" Hanbury writes, a Eurasian school is "very much required here, there being many half-caste children who are but little cared for, but who might be trained for useful members of society, and form a good link to promote a more kindly feeling between European and Chinese."[89] Hanbury's attitude on Eurasian children is likely illustrative of the sentiment of many Europeans in Shanghai. On the one hand Hanbury refers to Eurasians as "half-caste" suggesting an existing caste system in which Eurasians are positioned below white Europeans. On the other hand, Hanbury presents the position held by many that Eurasians in China represent the possibility of increased cooperation between Europeans and Chinese. The "First Yearly Report of the Shanghai Eurasian School" archived in Bonney's *A Legacy of Historical Gleanings: Vol II,* states that "there are many reasons for dealing with Eurasian children as a class by themselves, at least during the earlier years of their education; and it has always been felt that, wherever such children exist in considerable numbers, schools for them are a necessity." The report mentions similar schools founded for Eurasian children in Calcutta (Kolkata), Lucknow, Hong Kong, and in Japan. The report states that at its inception in 1870 the school served twelve "boarders" and twenty "day scholars."[90]

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[89] Thomas Hanbury, *Letters of Sir Thomas Hanbury* (London: West, Newman and Co., 1913), https://archive.org/details/cu31924021575034/mode/2up, 223.

[90] Catharina V.R. Bonney, *A Legacy of Historical Gleanings*, vol. II, II vols. (Albany, N.Y.: J. Munsell 82 State Street, 1875), 524.

It is difficult to estimate the number of Eurasian children living in Shanghai and the percentage of those that attended the Shanghai Eurasian School. Census reports from the International Settlement divide the population into categories of foreign and Chinese but do not count the number of Eurasians living in the region. Some reports break down the foreign population by individual's country of origin but also do not include Eurasian as a category. For example, Richard Feetham's report to the Shanghai Municipal Council states that "in 1865 the first municipal census was officially taken; the figures for the census show the total resident foreign population of the entire area, including the American Settlement, as 2,235, of whom 1,329 were British, 360 American and 175 German."[91] An 1875 article from the section "Summary of News from the Far East" in *The London and China Telegraph,* reports: "the committee of the Eurasian school [is] lamenting the want of adequate support...The present number of scholars is, we believe, thirty-one, and though the progress made by them has been satisfactory, disappointment is very naturally expressed that a much larger number do not avail themselves of the institution. In principle, we quite agree with Mr. Hanbury that it is preferable the school should be worked as a public institution."[92] Records suggest the Shanghai Eurasian School could not exist solely for the education of Eurasians due to a lack of an adequate student population. It is possible Bonney and Hanbury overestimated the number of Eurasian children in the region, or the parents of Eurasian children did not want to set

[91] Feetham, *Report of the Hon. Richard Feetham C.M.G. to the Shanghai Municipal Council,* 30.

[92] "Summary of News from the Far East: China: Peking, Shanghai," *The London and China Telegraph*, March 22, 1875, Charles William Wason Collection: China and the Chinese, 221.

them apart from their foreign and Chinese peers. Eurasian students attended other schools despite the discrimination they faced, and others were sent away to European boarding schools. Nevertheless, Bonney, who worked at the Shanghai Eurasian School for less than three years, concluded that it "was eminently successful as also widely welcomed."[93] Feetham reports in 1890 the Shanghai Municipal Council took over control of the school and converted it to a school for the children of foreigners.[94] It is difficult to assess if the school met the goal of its beneficiary Hanbury to "promote a more kindly feeling between European and Chinese." Responding to Hanbury's hopes, Bickers concludes that in fact Eurasians "were routinely caricatured and hated, and there was no Eurasian bridge."[95] However, the business success of one the school's alumni, Henry, showcases the possibilities available to some Shanghai Eurasians.

By the time of his marriage, Poston reports both of Henry's parents already passed away. In his book on Eurasian ancestry, author Eric Peter Ho reports that a pattern emerged in Hong Kong of Eurasians marrying fellow Eurasians through arranged unions.[96] A similar phenomenon seems to be present in fin-de-siècle Shanghai. Henry's wife Louisa was born in 1866 in Ningbo to a Eurasian mother and European father. Two of Louisa's siblings also married individuals of mixed European and Chinese descent. And Henry's only sibling James Ollerdessen also married a Eurasian woman, Henrietta

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[93] Bonney, *A Legacy of Historical Gleanings*, 522.

[94] Feetham, *Report of the Hon. Richard Feetham, C.M.G. to the Shanghai Municipal Council*, 46.

[95] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 227.

[96] Eric Peter Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong, 2010), 10-11.

Pellew.[97] Poston describes her grandparents, Louisa and Henry, likely retelling the stories and descriptions told to her by their descendants, writing Louisa was known as "the Belle of Hongkew…a handsome woman in her youth, tall for the time, with dark eyes, wavy hair, and fine, even features." Poston writes the twenty-one-year-old Henry "felt he could afford to get married as he had a good job and his own private rickshaw."[98] Louisa and Henry married in 1885 at the Catholic St. Joseph's Church in Shanghai's French Concession.[99]

In the late nineteenth century, Louisa and Henry grew a family together in Shanghai. Henry's obituary notes he was "intimately connected with Shanghai, having passed practically all his life here."[100] Between 1887 and 1899 the couple had seven children. In the year of their marriage, "H. Ollerdessen" is listed in a Shanghai Municipal Council "Report and Budget."[101] Four years previously, Henry worked as a clerk for John Morris and Co., a "commission and ship agents" located in the French Concession. Henry would go on to work in the Shanghai Stock Exchange and according to family notes he was the "Chairman of the Stock Exchange."[102] Henry's obituary in *The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* reports that his "cool-headed judgement

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[97] Paul Pellew, *Shattered China Dream* (Paul Pellew, 2015), 208.

[98] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 55.

[99] "Marriage Announcement 1."

[100] "Obituary: Mr. H. Ollerdessen.," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, July 20, 1912, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[101] "Municipal Council, Shanghai: Report for the Year Ended 31st December 1885 and Budget for the Year Ending 31st December 1886" (Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1886).

[102] Poston, "Family Tree."

and his natural business acumen placed him in the ranks of the leading brokers of the Settlement."[103] Known as "Honest Henry", according to Poston, he had a "good reputation and an even temper." Poston further describes that Henry "wore a pince-nez, had a moustache and was fairly portly. He had a fair complexion, and was average in height."[104] By the turn of the twentieth century Louisa and Henry established themselves within the Shanghai foreign community, enabling their children access to the possibilities available to Westerners in China.

Like many Europeans living in Shanghai, the Eurasian Ollerdessens lived a lavish lifestyle. The Ollerdessens' wealth and status afforded them opportunities unavailable to other Eurasians in Shanghai. Poston writes that Louisa and Henry built a home on the "western edge of Shanghai for their growing family." The large home included a "spacious garden and tennis court." The family employed many servants and owned a horse-drawn carriage. They hosted extravagant parties on the weekend, drinking tea, and playing bridge and mahjong.[105] Among their friends were the American-educated Chinese doctor, Dr. Siao, and his wife "Auntie Ah Chew." Embracing the cosmopolitanism of Shanghai, Henry "organized and started the Thirty Club for young businessmen of all nationalities."[106] Consistent with both British and Chinese cultural traditions at the time, Louisa thought women should be married and run the household.

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[103] "Obituary: Mr. H. Ollerdessen."

[104] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 55.

[105] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 11.

[106] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 55.

Poston writes that, "Grandmother Louisa taught her daughters to be able to manage the household. Each girl would take a turn: for a month at a time one of the girls would be responsible for ordering meals and supervising the servants' work."[107] Louisa managed a household of seven children and numerous servants. According to Henry's obituary, three years before his death he "made an extended trip to Europe and America."[108] According to Louisa's 1918 passport application which features her image (Figure 11), the couple made two trips to the United States in 1908 and 1910.[109] A 1908 passenger list of the RMS Campania, confirms Louisa, Henry, and three of their children traveled from Liverpool to New York in 1908.[110] At the time of Henry's death in 1912, his estate was valued at over $500,000 American dollars.[111] Louisa and Henry's children grew up wealthy in cosmopolitan Shanghai and took advantage of the economic possibilities of the thriving and growing city.

Figure 11"Louisa Ollerdessen nee Cooke", 1918, U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925, s.v. "Louisa Ollerdessen", www.ancestry.com

[107] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 11-13.

[108] "Obituary: Mr. H. Ollerdessen."

[109] "U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925," digital image s.v. "Mrs. Louisa Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[110] "New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957," digital image s.v. "Henry Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[111] "Reports of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, 1835-1974," digital image s.v. "Henry Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

Many Eurasians grew up without knowledge of their mixed cultural background. Some Eurasians choose to identify as European or Chinese, avoiding racial or cultural ambiguity or discrimination based on their mixed heritage. Many, as Teng explains, hid their mixed background "out of shame and a desire to belong."[112] Consequently, many individuals discovered their Eurasian backgrounds later in life. One of Louisa and Henry's grandchildren illustrate the consequences of hiding a family's history. Poston, the daughter of Margaret Ollerdessen, Louisa and Henry's fifth child, describes how she first learned that she had Chinese ancestors:

> One night Auntie Ethel must have been going through all the old family pictures. She brought them down to the living room for us to see. We children never knew our maternal grandparents as they had died before we were born. One of the pictures was a family portrait of our maternal grandparents and all their children which had been taken when they were young. I was amazed! Our grandparents looked western, but some of the children in the picture, who were our mothers, aunts and uncles, looked Chinese! We knew our aunts and uncles: they looked Caucasian, spoke English, and wore western clothes. Even our most-distant relatives did not have Chinese features.[113]

Clearly, the Ollerdessens identified as Western and did not practice Chinese cultural traditions. It seems some of Louisa and Henry's children did not reveal their Chinese heritage to their own children. The grandmothers of Louisa and Henry's children were not alive during their lives. It is probable they did not know any of their Chinese extended family. Poston speculates about why her mother hid this information, writing that "I knew there was a certain amount of discrimination towards Eurasians. Perhaps

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[112] Teng, *Eurasian*, 22.

[113] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 49.

they were trying to gently introduce this information to us." The author further writes "as time passed, I grew proud of my mixed heritage."[114]

Figure 12 (left) "Albert Ollerdessen", 1919, U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925, s.v. "Albert Francis Ollerdessen", www.ancestry.com

Figure 13 (right) "Harry Ollerdessen", 1920, U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925, s.v. "Harry Bertram Ollerdessen", www.ancestry.com

It is unclear if the cosmopolitan Shanghai community considered the Ollerdessen children Eurasian or if they personally identified with their mixed background. Like their mother Louisa, her children show how the definition of a Eurasian individual, defined in the 1878 *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East* as the "offspring of a European father and an Asiatic mother" did not capture the entirety of the Eurasian community in China.[115] With a Eurasian father, Eurasian maternal grandmother, and a Chinese paternal grandmother, it is likely the Ollerdessen children at least grappled with their Chinese heritage even if they did not practice Chinese cultural traditions. Whether considered Eurasian or Western, the Ollerdessens became a well-known family within cosmopolitan Shanghai. *The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* announced at least two of Louisa and Henry's daughters' weddings. In 1911, a

[114] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 50-54.

[115] Herbert, *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 39.

year before Henry passed away, his eldest daughter Agnes married an Australian named Eric Prince.[116] In 1920, months before Louisa passed away, her daughter Ethel married an American named Herbert Gallop. The article describes Ethel's wedding dress, "of Chantilly lace, trimmed with pearls and orange blossom." The article reports that Louisa, "the bride's mother wore a dress of grey georgette, with grey toque." Further showcasing the extravagance of the Gallop-Ollerdessen wedding, the article mentions that "the bridegroom's present to the bride was a diamond and pearl pendant set in platinum, and that of the bride to the bridegroom was a pearl scarf-pin" and that the couple would spend their honeymoon in Nanjing before traveling to the United States.[117] Albert (Figure 12) and his older brother Harry (Figure 13), the two eldest of Louisa and Henry's seven children, are both listed in *The China Who's Who: Foreign,* a 1924 directory of foreigners in China. Albert is listed as the "Commercial Manager" of "Fobes, Company Limited" and as a member of the racially segregated Race Club and his father's multinational Thirty Club. Professionally, Harry followed his father's example and worked as a stockbroker in Shanghai's Stock Exchange. Harry served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army and commanding officer in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps.[118] Albert also served in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, formed in the mid-nineteenth century by foreigners in Shanghai to defend foreign settlements against the invading Taiping rebels. Like their grandfather James, Albert and Harry helped protect the foreign settlements and

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[116] "Marriages.," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, February 24, 1911, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[117] "Gallop-Ollerdessen.," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, June 26, 1920, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[118] *The China Who's Who ... (Foreign),* 197.

their economic interests in Shanghai. On his World War I registration card, Albert is listed as a "Private in Shanghai Volunteer Corps, infantry," born to American parents, with the section labeled "race" filled in as "Anglo-Saxon."[119] It is difficult to ascertain Albert's reasoning for identifying as "Anglo-Saxon" on his registration card. Registering with the American government, it is possible he worried about the discrimination he would face if he was labeled Eurasian or Chinese.

Albert utilized the opportunities available to him in Shanghai's International Settlement. A tragic accident caused by Albert showcases the extent of the extraterritoriality rights granted to foreigners within the treaty ports. As an American citizen, Albert fell under the legal purview of the United States or the International Settlement and not the Chinese.[120] On August 4, 1921, Albert "involuntarily and without malice" struck and killed a Chinese man named Loh Ah Wo with his car. The United States and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney R.S. Haskell charged him with involuntary manslaughter. Loh Ah Wo's widow, called as witness, said at the trial, "what good will it do me to have this man (defendant) sent to prison? That will not feed me and my children." Rather than imprisonment or a fine, the prosecution joined the defense in recommending Albert pay Loh Ah Wo's widow nineteen dollars per month, the equivalent of her husband's salary.[121] This incident reveals the complicated legal system

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[119] "U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," digital image s.v. "Albert Francis Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[120] "U.S., Consular Registration Certificates, 1907-1918," digital image s.v. "Albert Francis Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[121] Chester G Verner, "Judicial Decisions on Criminal Law and Procedure," *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* 11, no. 4 (February 1921): 609-610.

within Shanghai. As an American with extraterritoriality rights Albert avoided dealing with the Chinese legal system. Further the case shows how many Eurasians considered foreign by their citizenship or national ties made use of the laws favoring foreigners in the International Settlement and treaty ports. Albert further took advantage of the opportunities made available to him as a wealthy foreigner in Shanghai. His niece Poston remembers that her uncle, whom she refers to as Uncle Bertie, "had such a good reputation in the business world that when the Japanese took over Shanghai in 1937, his Chinese compradore and business partner Admiral Ma, turned over his other business interest to Uncle Bertie so that they could be incorporated under American law and protection."[122] Albert's business work took him around the world, traveling between New York City, San Francisco, and Shanghai with residences listed in each city.[123] On a trip to San Francisco Albert met an American woman named Ellen McGillivray. Albert and Ellen married in San Francisco in 1920 and returned to live in Shanghai.[124] Together they made a family in Shanghai, with Ellen giving birth to two boys, Albert William in 1923 and Henry James in 1925.[125]

The most well-known of Louisa and Henry's children, Albert's brother Harry, passed away in 1930 at the age of forty-five. Three separate newspaper articles covered

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[122] Poston, *My Upside-Down World*, 83.

[123] "California, Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1959," digital image s.v. "Albert Francis Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com. "New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957," digital image s.v. "Albert F Ollerdessen",http://www.Ancestry.com.

[124] *The China Who's Who ... (Foreign),* 197.

[125] "U.S., Consular Reports of Births, 1910-1949," digital image s.v. "Albert Francis Ollerdessen", http://www.Ancestry.com.

his death and his memory. The first appeared in *The China Press* on February 27, 1930 titled "Harry Ollerdessen Passes Away Last Night At Hospital: Sad Death of Shanghai's Leading Sportsman Shocks Friends." Harry is described as a "well-known local sportsman and broker" and the "the best all-round athlete in the sporting history of Shanghai." He played many sports including cricket, soccer, and tennis. The article reports all of Harry's brothers as good athletes and his sister Ethel as "the lady tennis champion of Shanghai."[126] On March 1, 1930 a newspaper article detailed Harry's funeral services. Held at the Bubbling Well Cemetery, the article states that "had the chapel been six times its size, it could not have accommodated all those who desired by their presence to show a last mark of respect to one whose prowess and personal qualities they had so much admired." Further, the article mentions that "the big gathering was distinctly cosmopolitan, both in its constitution and its attitude. There were present western people of all nationalities and a large number of Japanese and Chinese."[127] On March 4, 1930 *The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* published a full-page obituary for Harry. In addition to detailing Harry's sports achievements the article states while an American "he was brought up largely under British ideas, because the British influence predominated in those days even more than it does now in Shanghai." At the end of the obituary is a list of a "great number of floral tributes" to Harry. Clearly many within both the foreign and Chinese communities

[126] "Harry Ollerdessen Passes Away Last Night At Hospital: Sad Death of Shanghai's Leading Sportsman Shocks Friends," *The China Press*, February 27, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[127] "H.B. Ollerdessen, Noted Sportsman Is Laid To Rest: Impressive Rites Attended By Large Gathering Of Relatives, Friends.," *The China Press*, March 1, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

admired him. None of the articles about Harry mention his Eurasian parents or his mixed background. However, Harry was not the only Eurasian former athlete to gain some amount of fame within the foreign Shanghai community. His obituary mentions "an occasion when Ollerdessen partnered W.S.A. Pott in a doubles match and it remains in the memory as the most exciting game he has seen in Shanghai."[128]

Members of two of Shanghai's Eurasian families, the Ollerdessens and the Potts, associated as acquaintances and friends. In the preface of his book, *A Short History of Shanghai* Pott acknowledges "his indebtedness to a large number of friends, both foreign and Chinese, for their assistance" including "Mr. A. F. Ollerdessen."[129] And, as noted, Pott's son and Harry Ollerdessen partnered in a tennis match. Pott married and had children with a Chinese woman named Wong Soo-Ngoo who later adopted her husband's family name. The daughter "of the first baptized Chinese clergyman of the American Episcopal Church Mission, Rev. K.C. Wong," before her marriage, Wong worked as the first principal of the Christian missionary school in Shanghai, St. Mary.[130] By the end of the nineteenth century, St. Mary operated as one of "the most popular middle schools for girls in treaty-port Shanghai." The school served the children of wealthy Shanghai families and the children of Christian converts. Noteworthy alumni include novelist

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[128] "Obituary: Mr. H. B. Ollerdessen," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, March 4, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[129] Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai*, 8.

[130] Xiaoyan Liu, *The Changing Face of Women's Education in China: A Critical History of St. Mary's Hall, McTyeire School and Shanghai No. 3 Girls' Middle School* (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2017), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Changing_Face_of_Women_s_Education_i/7oBHDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, 26.

Eileen Chang, pathologist Ling Lili, and the politically powerful Soong Sisters.[131] In her book on women's education in China, Xiaoyan Liu writes the school's superintendent Henrietta Boone spoke highly of Wong. Liu also reports Wong faced discrimination as a Chinese woman in a position of power in a Christian school. Liu writes that "Wong's leadership had some male missionaries uncomfortable...apparently, it was not within the intention of the Episcopal Church to treat Chinese staff as their equals."[132] Wong continued as principal of St. Mary until her marriage to Pott in 1888. Pott worked as the headmaster of St. John's College in Shanghai. In a letter Pott wrote that "in 1920 I received the Decoration of the Third Order of the Chiao Ho (Flourishing Grain) from the Chinese Government in recognition of my educational work."[133] In addition to *A Short History of Shanghai,* Pott authored *A Sketch in Chinese History, The Emergency in China,* and *Lessons in the Shanghai Dialect.* Wong and Pott had four children, including a son named William Sumner Appleton Pott. W.S.A. Pott, like the Ollerdessens, represents the possibilities available to some Eurasians in Shanghai.

With influential and well-educated parents, W.S.A. Pott pursued a career in academia. *The Spirit of Missions: An Illustrated Monthly Review of Christian Missions* reports in 1913 that "at the request of Bishop Graves the appointment of Mr. W.S.A. Pott, son of the Rev. Dr. F.L.H. Pott, of St. John's University, Shanghai" approved to be a

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[131] Liu, *The Changing Face of Women's Education in China*, 4-7.

[132] Liu, *The Changing Face of Women's Education in China,* 27.

[133] A.V. Williams Jackson and J. Parke Channing, eds., *A History of the Class of Eighty-Three of Columbia College Arts and Mines 1908-1923* (New York: Privately Printed, 1923), 67-68.

teacher at the university.[134] University of Virginia records reveal that by 1916 W.S.A. Pott, who had earned Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees, began working as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy.[135] While he spent the rest of his life living in the United States, W.S.A. Pott's work included study of his mother's home country. In 1925, Pott authored *Chinese Political Philosophy* and dedicated it "to the memory of my mother who possessed the highest virtues of East and West, and of whom this comparative Study is far from worthy."[136] *Chinese Political Philosophy* is strictly academic, including a comparative study of Confucius and Socrates, and W.S.A. Pott makes no reference to his personal life or beliefs. However, perhaps he considered his parents or his experience in Shanghai when he posited that "East and West are obviously different and the recognition of the fact that a profound difference exists must be the beginning of mutual understandings."[137] Many cultural exchanges between Chinese and European individuals in Shanghai likely depended on mutual understanding. The exchanges that occurred in intimate relationships that developed between Chinese and Europeans, like the marriage of F.L.H. Pott and Wong Soo-Ngoo, influenced their children's upbringings. The traditions and lessons passed down by parents to their

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[134] *The Spirit of Missions: An Illustrated Monthly Review of Christian Missions*, vol. 78 (New York: J. L. Powell, 1913), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Spirit_of_Missions/MrfSAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0.

[135] "The University of Virginia Record" (University of Virginia, 1921), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_University_of_Virginia_Record/gN5KAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0.

[136] William S.A. Pott, *Chinese Political Philosophy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1925), https://www.google.com/books/edition/chinese_political_philosophy/m3SdBOTgvzcC?hl=en&gbpv=0.

[137] Pott, *Chinese Political Philosophy*, 8.

Eurasian children likely formed in part by the cultural exchanges and mutual understanding required in mixed-race relationships.

3. Heung Seui 香瑞 and Augustus White

In an era and place where many considered relationships between Europeans and Chinese a social taboo and even illegitimate, Heung Seui (香瑞) and Augustus White maintained a nearly two-decade-long union that produced eight children. Born thousands of miles apart and encountering vast cultural differences between them, Seui and Augustus are an example one of the many relationships between Europeans and Chinese in Shanghai in the mid-nineteenth century. As with most of the mixed-race relationships in Shanghai, records divulge very little about the nature of their bond, and the memory of the experiences Seui and Augustus shared and how they navigated as a mixed couple in Shanghai are lost to time. Yet, by looking closely at the records the couple did leave behind, including those of their mixed-race children, they reveal how culture and traditions sustained and transformed from generation to generation in mixed-race families. Furthermore, their experiences show how living in the cosmopolitan yet racially and culturally segregated Shanghai affected cultural exchanges within mixed-race and Eurasian families.

While little is known about Augustus' experiences as a child, historical records place him in London for the first two decades of his life. The fourth child and first son born to Mary Ann and Augustus Jackson White, Augustus grew up in a large and wealthy English family. The English Censuses of 1851 and 1861 provide insight into the living

conditions of the White family. Augustus Jackson worked as an accountant for the London Joint Stock Bank. In addition to eight children ranging in age from one to twenty-four years old, in 1851 a "house servant" lived with the White family.[138] The next Census shows in ten years Augustus Jackson moved up the ranks, working as a bank manager and employing three live-in servants.[139] In addition to his occupation as a banker and his family's capability to hire live-in servants, Augustus Jackson's will provides additional evidence of the family's wealth, listing his effects as valued under £7,000 or roughly the modern equivalent of over £400,000 British pounds.[140] Augustus, in his early twenties by 1861, is not listed in the Census records because he had already begun his journey to China. Augustus left England in 1860 initially arriving at the British colony of Hong Kong.

According to historian James Carter, Augustus White "seemed to exemplify the English colonist: born in Middlesex, traveling to Asia in the wake of a war that provided Britain with colonists and trade on its own terms, growing rich as the empire expanded."[141] Evidence indicates Augustus voyaged to Hong Kong alone as none of his siblings or extended family joined him. He returned to England later in life, suggesting that despite moving far from his home he maintained a relationship with his English

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[138] "1851 England Census," digital image s.v. "Augustus White", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[139] "1861 England Census," digital image s.v. "Augustus J White", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[140] "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995." Digital image s.v. "Augustus Jackson White", http://www.Ancestry.com. "Currency Converter: 1270-2017", The National Archives, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/

[141] James Carter, *Champions Day: The End of Old Shanghai*, First edition (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020), 35.

family.[142] His son Harry Owen, writing about his family's history, reports his father left London in 1860 and "came out East as a young man of only 23 for the Chartered Bank of London (at that time known as The Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China)."[143] Carter writes Augustus arrived in Hong Kong in the early 1860s, in a wave of migration of Europeans after the Opium Wars.[144] The Treaty of Nanking, in addition to opening treaty ports along the Pacific coast to foreign trade and settlement, ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British.[145] Augustus did not leave behind any records indicating why he left England for Hong Kong, but making a new life in a foreign land might have been appealing as he lived the rest of his life in China, visiting England in 1878, only to return.[146] Like his father in London, Augustus made his living and grew his wealth as a banker. After moving to Shanghai, Augustus continued his employment with the Chartered Bank, working in its first Shanghai office. In 1870 he left Chartered Bank to "establish his own brokerage", White and Co.[147] In many ways, Augustus indeed exemplified a British colonist, but he also forged a new identity as a foreign settler in the city of Shanghai.

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[142] André Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family," 2005, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood.

[143] Harry Owen White, "Private Letter to Neville White," June 11, 1963, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood.

[144] Carter, *Champions Day*, 35.

[145] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 158.

[146] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

[147] Carter, *Champions Day*, 35.

In Hong Kong Augustus met and maintained a relationship with a Chinese woman named Seui. At the time, some Westerners viewed these relationships as merely casual if not transactional. Lamson describes the popular notion of "native wives" or mistresses of colonial men. Lamson writes that in the "1850's and 1860's there are references to such native wives as 'housekeeper of so-and-so,' or as 'a Canton girl kept by an American.'"[148] This is the colonial attitude exemplified by Robert Hart who maintained only temporary relationships with Chinese women. Bickers presents the perspective of a surgeon in Shanghai, Edward Henderson, who reported: "'considerable numbers' of 'native mistresses of foreign residents' in 1871, mostly but not exclusively living in houses of their own, kept by their 'owners', as he put it, who had 'hired' or 'bought' them."[149] Bickers notes that readers should not assume, like Henderson, that there was no real affection between individuals in these mixed-race relationships. While many of the relationships between European men and Chinese women in the treaty ports involved sex work or were merely temporary, by assuming such, Lamson and Henderson's analyses reflect the discrimination faced by mixed-race couples. Bickers writes that amongst the British settler community in Shanghai "intimate relations were seen as transgressions. Taboos against marriage with Chinese, indeed, against open sexual contact with Chinese women or men, were strong."[150] Nonetheless, birth records from the British Consulate in Shanghai suggest that Seui and Augustus continued a relationship together, having eight

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[148] H. D. Lamson, "Sino-American Miscegenation in Shanghai," *Social Forces* 14, no. 4 (May 1, 1936): 573, https://doi.org/10.2307/2571124.

[149] Bickers, *The Scramble for China,* 225.

[150] Bickers, "Shanghailanders," 188.

children between 1864 and 1875.[151] Their relationship appears anything but casual, as over a decade they made a family together.

The birth records for each of their eight children list both Seui and Augustus as the parents. Seui is listed as, "Sewey Heong 香瑞." The birth records of her children are the only piece of evidence including Seui's name. On the record, it also notes that she is Chinese and not married.[152] Art historian Zaixin Hong identifies Seui as Cantonese.[153] Cantonese can refer both to the language and the people of southern China's Guangdong Province. Many Cantonese people "have long referred to themselves as either Yue people or Tang people, seeing themselves respectively as descendants of either the Nanyue or the Tang dynasty."[154] Guangdong Province had long been the site of encounters between Europeans and Chinese because, as Spence reports, "all European trade was restricted to the one port of Canton after 1760" and Guangzhou (Canton) remained the only trading port open to the British until the signing of the Treaty of Nanking.[155] Seui and Augustus did not officially register their relationship as a marriage with the British Consulate in Shanghai and a note on the birth records of their children reads, "father excused himself

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[151] "UK, Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths From British Consulates, 1810-1968," digital image s.v. "Harry Owen White", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[152] "UK, Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths From British Consulates, 1810-1968," digital image s.v. "Sewey Heong", http://www.Ancestry.com.

[153] Zaixin Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise': Star Talbot and His Innovative Contributions to the Art Business of Modern Shanghai.," in *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from the Treaty Ports to World War II*, ed. Jennifer Purtle and Hans Thomsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2009), 88.

[154] Kevin Carrico, "Recentering China: The Cantonese in and beyond the Han," in *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*, ed. Thomas S. Mullaney et al. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 23–44, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14631369.2013.759770.

[155] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 119.

from previous registry on the ground of ignorance of the necessity of registering within 7 years."[156] The couple's decision not to marry or not to register a marriage, considered along with the late registration of their children's birth, likely reveals the prejudice endured by mixed-race couples. Bickers describes how racism in Shanghai, "hardened attitudes against even legitimate unions. Formal marriage with Chinese women was in some places prohibited by service regulation (in the police at Shanghai, later) or elsewhere more insidiously by informal, but no less rigid, practice. A man might lose his job, he might certainly lose all hope of preferment, if he contracted such a marriage."[157] It is not surprising therefore that Seui and Augustus are listed as unmarried, as at the time very few mixed-race couples legally married in China or within the foreign settlements. It is possible Augustus feared how his banking business, named after himself, would suffer by divulging the racial background of his children. Given Augustus' stature in the business and social circles in Shanghai, it is also possible the couple maintained a public relationship in certain social circles. The birth records of their children show that in between the birth of their first and second child, Seui and Augustus moved from Hong Kong to Shanghai. Teng explains that in Hong Kong as compared to Shanghai, "the color line was more rigidly upheld."[158] The "color line" may have been stricter in Hong Kong because it was a British-controlled port as compared to the more cosmopolitan Shanghai. Writing about the couple's move, Carter writes that, "there's no indication that they left

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[156] "UK, Registers of Births", digital image s.v. "Sewey Heong".

[157] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 226.

[158] Teng, *Eurasian*, 206.

because of their relationship, though it is possible social stigma drove the couple out of Hong Kong." Reflecting on the records of their children together Carter concludes that although Augustus and Seui never married, they were a family.[159]

Seui and Augustus' children grew up in a typical British colonial household and followed many British customs. Augustus became a well-known and respected figure in the International Settlement in Shanghai. An article in the *North-China Daily News* announcing his death notes that "his portly figure was a landmark in Shanghai" and further that "his sterling qualities and his business abilities made him very widely liked and respected, and his success in his profession was amply deserved."[160] Nowhere in his death announcement does it mention Seui, the mother of eight of his children. Augustus exhibited many qualities typical of a British colonist. The *North-China Daily News* reports he liked to garden, supported further by the Shanghai Municipal Council Report that states in 1884, Augustus maintained all the trees along the Bund.[161] The Bund, explained in *The Old Shanghai A-Z*, "rhymes with 'shunned' is a Hindustani word meaning 'a made embankment on a water front'...In the 1880s the British-dominated SMC (Shanghai Municipal Council) decided to convert it into a public esplanade and connect it to the public gardens that were established in 1868."[162] Augustus' recreational activities reflected that of a typical English colonist, including gardening, shooting, playing cricket, and attending horse races. The White family estate was located "in the

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[159] Carter, *Champions Day*, 36.

[160] "News of the Week", *The Japan Daily Mail,* June 6, 1903.

[161] "Report and Budget: Shanghai Municipal Council", (Kelly & Walsh, 1889).

[162] French, "The International Settlement A-Z," 86.

countryside west of the French Concession along Siccawei Road" according to Carter and while "quintessentially British and colonial" also embraced the cosmopolitanism of mid-nineteenth century Shanghai. Carter describes the estate, nicknamed 'Clatterhouse', in detail, writing: "a leopard-skin rug in the foyer welcomed visitors. Nearly every room featured animal-skin rugs and antlers on the walls; scenes of English military escapades or hunting scenes of foxes, pheasants, horses, and hounds hung alongside Japanese objects d'art, Chinese vases, and family photographs. And of course, there was a bar outfitted for Shanghailand: French and Italian vermouth; Dawson's scotch; Asahi lager; Guinness stout." In many respects a typical British colonist, unlike most British settlers, Augustus maintained a relationship with a Chinese woman and eight of his children were Eurasian. It is possible Seui maintained a separate home, a common occurrence according to the surgeon Henderson. However unlikely, it is also plausible that given the frequency of the births of their children Seui and Augustus lived together. The White children grew up with a British father and a Chinese mother, in a Chinese city, in a cosmopolitan neighborhood, and in a household that likely reflected the two cultures of their parents.

Unfortunately, historical records largely confine Seui to a mother of her eight children. Little is known about her motivations or experiences. Carter writes that "we don't know what became of Sewey Heong (she may have died in 1877 - at what age is unknown)." One piece of evidence suggesting Seui passed away around the year 1877, is that in 1878 Augustus married and went on to have two more children with an English woman named Maude Pratt. As Seui's children were between the ages of two and thirteen at the time of their father's marriage, and that Maude Pratt passed away only a few years

after her marriage, they likely spent some of their childhood years without their mother or stepmother. The White children's amahs, which Bickers defines as nannies or wet-nurses, likely served as another influential figure as they did for many foreign children living in China. Wealthy Chinese and foreign families employed many servants, including amahs. Even less well-off foreign families often employed Chinese servants and amahs. Bickers reports that "amahs were prominent figures in the home life of Europeans...and often untold are the intense relationships that developed between servants and young foreign children, who, it is often attested, better spoke the language of their carers than that of their parents."[163] Given the Whites' wealth it is almost certain the children grew up with Chinese amahs helping to raise and take care of them. As Bickers notes many these relationships served as pivotal experiences in the lives of young foreigners. After the deaths of their mother and stepmother, their amah likely served as the central female figure in the lives of the White children. Sources do not indicate if they knew their mother's family. Hall writes that while Eurasians in Hong Kong often had Chinese names or took the family name of their Chinese mother, in Shanghai Eurasians usually adopted their father's European name and the White children followed the pattern.[164] However, Seui's children probably identified as Eurasian which may have been a conscious choice or an identity assigned to them based on their appearance and background. Seui and Augustus' children grew into prominent members of the International Settlement community, and their Eurasian background may have been apparent despite their British

[163] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 312.

[164] Hall, *In the Web*, 30.

names. Carter contends that, as a prominent Eurasian family in Shanghai, the Whites "shed important light on the nature of Shanghai society."[165]

Seui and Augustus raised all their children in Shanghai. Their two eldest daughters passed away as teenagers in a tragic boating accident while vacationing in London. Records indicate that at least two of their six children who reached adulthood went on to marry fellow Shanghai Eurasians. A family history source suggests Seui arranged at least one of her daughters' marriages, a common Chinese practice.[166] Writing about the experiences of his Eurasian family in Hong Kong, Ho writes that "another consequence of social prejudice was that intermarriage with Chinese or British families was out of the question for most Hong Kong Eurasians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marrying within the Eurasian community was the solution, especially as arranged marriages were the norm up to my parents' generation."[167] Discrimination faced by Eurasians in Shanghai might have led to a similar pattern, also evidenced by the Eurasian Ollerdessens. Augustus William, Seui and Augustus' eldest son, married Louisa Cooke's sister Clara. Both Augustus William and Clara had a European father and a Chinese mother.[168] It is possible Seui arranged their marriage with Clara's mother Mary. The historical record of Augustus William and Clara is sparse but their son Augustus Victor, who went by Gussie, became a renowned member in the Shanghai horse racing

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[165] Carter, *Champions Day*, 36-37.

[166] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

[167] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 10-11.

[168] Poston, "Family Tree."

community. Writing about Gussie, Carter reports that among the foreign racing community, "everyone was aware that his family was Eurasian. The Whites, in other words, weren't completely...white."[169]

Gussie White grew up in two Eurasian families as the grandson of Heung Seui and Augustus White and Mary Akum Sage and James Cooke. His interest in horse racing is noteworthy because, like many British institutions in Shanghai, the Race Club excluded non-white members. Carter describes the Shanghai Race Club writing that "one description of the Shanghai Club extolled it as 'thoroughly cosmopolitan, and its members are of every nationality.' Its membership was restricted to white males, illustrating clearly the sort of 'cosmopolitanism' Shanghailanders envisioned."[170] Carter further describes the hypocrisy of this racial exclusion common in the foreign concessions writing that "to become a member, a man - at first, only men, - 'of legal age' needed to be nominated by a member and voted on for membership...Whether or not these rules were printed, club members understood that Chinese were not appropriate nominees, even though plenty of wealthy Chinese who would otherwise fit the bill for membership called Shanghai home."[171] Carter reports Gussie White joined the Race Club in 1918 and as a "society mainstay" he soon became one of the Club's "most prominent and successful riders and owners."[172] His ability to navigate the racial barriers of the Shanghailander community could be anomalous or representative of the diverse

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[169] Carter, *Champions Day*, 62.

[170] Carter, *Champions Day*, 38.

[171] Carter, *Champions Day*, 48.

[172] Carter, *Champions Day*, 112.

experiences of Eurasians in Shanghai. The wealth and status of his family may have provided Gussie with opportunities denied to other Eurasians. His renown in the Race Club demonstrates the complicated and fluid notions of race and identity within Shanghai.

Perhaps the most well-known Eurasian family in Shanghai, the Hardoons, serve as another example of how Eurasians formed and expressed cultural identities. Born the same year as Seui and Augustus White's eldest daughter, the life of Liza Hardoon, born Luo Jialing in Shanghai in 1864 to a Chinese mother named Shen Yi and a French father named Isaac Roos in Shanghai, sheds further light on the diverse experiences of Shanghai Eurasians. Like Seui and Augustus, Hardoon's parents never officially married. Carter reports that while they lived together Shen Yi and Isaac Roos pretended, "that Roos employed Shen as his housekeeper, even after Liza was born." Perhaps because her father later abandoned the family when she was only three, Hardoon's family did not follow the pattern of naming Eurasian children the family name of their father. As a child, Hardoon may not have been aware of her Eurasian background and her upbringing led to her identifying closely with her mother's Chinese culture. For example, Hardoon "spoke Shanghainese as her native language, learning English only after her marriage, and Mandarin not until she was in her fifties!" Hardoon's identity as Chinese is further evident by the fact that her husband, Jewish merchant Silas Hardoon, also embraced Chinese culture.[173] Silas Hardoon's marriage to a Eurasian woman gained infamy within the Shanghai foreign community. Carter reports "everyone in Shanghai knew about

[173] Carter, *Champions Day*, 119-122.

Hardoon, born to a Chinese mother and French father, and the widow of Silas Aaron Hardoon, one of the richest of Shanghai's many rich merchants."[174] Silas Hardoon worked for the powerful trading company David Sassoon & Sons Co. and became a wealthy landowner in Shanghai. In an excerpt about Hardoon Road in Shanghai, named for Silas Hardoon, author Paul French writes that "he took the almost unprecedented step of marrying a Chinese woman."[175] Author Taras Grescoe further adds that "blue-blooded Shanghailanders, Hardoon knew, considered his marriage to a half-caste the height of eccentricity."[176] Likely demonstrating the lived experience of other Shanghai Eurasians, the foreign community in Shanghai identified Liza Hardoon, like they did Gussie White, by her mixed ancestry. Early twentieth-century American author Grace Thompson Seton adds that Hardoon authored many "books of a philosophical and ethical nature" including "translations and interpretations of Buddhist writings."[177] Hardoon's embrace of her Chinese culture assisted in her and her husband's navigation of the Chinese and foreign business communities. Her "connections brought him into contact with Chinese business networks that were inaccessible to most foreigners." According to Carter, a rumor in Shanghai at the time spread that Liza Hardoon played a central role in building the couple's fortune and that she "advised Silas to invest in real estate rather than in some of the many get-rich-quick schemes that abounded in nineteenth-century Shanghai." Carter

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[174] Carter, *Champions Day*, 9.

[175] French, "The International Settlement A-Z," 114-115.

[176] Taras Grescoe, *Shanghai Grand: Forbidden Love and International Intrigue in a Doomed World*, 2017, 50.

[177] Grace Thompson Seton, *Chinese Lanterns* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1924), https://www.google.com/books/edition/Chinese_Lanterns/43ZCAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, 268.

mentions that it was indeed unusual for a Chinese or Eurasian woman "to assume a prominent role in international society as Liza did."[178] In many respects, Liza Hardoon led an exceptional life.

Partly due to their wealth and status, Liza and Silas Hardoon maintained and displayed a multicultural identity. Their home became a tourist attraction in Shanghai and exemplified both of their cultures. Unlike the home of Augustus White which exhibited the cosmopolitanism of Shanghai yet also remained a British colonial home, the Hardoons' home blended both their cultures. While traveling the world, Seton met and later wrote about Liza Hardoon in her book, *Chinese Lanterns.* Visiting Liza sometime before her book published in 1924, Seton mentions her warm hospitality. Seton describes the Hardoon's Shanghai home, writing that, "the second story of this main house contained two complete suites for its owners, one furnished entirely and elaborately in the French style, and the other purely Chinese."[179] Carter describes the home: "designed by a Buddhist monk Liza commissioned, the gardens contrasted, or perhaps complemented, the Jewish and Buddhist elements inside the home. Buddhist pagodas and a temple, an artificial stream, Chinese theater, pavilions, and scenic spots for meditation dotted the garden." The Hardoons adopted twenty children of Eurasian, European, and Chinese backgrounds. However, perhaps evidence of the limitations placed on cross-cultural encounters even within families, "the Chinese and European children lived separately,

[178] Carter, *Champions Day*, 121-122.

[179] Seton, *Chinese Lanterns*, 269.

though they spent much time together."[180] The Hardoons embraced their multicultural identity and displayed it to the public. The couple threw large parties, inviting individuals from across the many cultures present in Shanghai. In 1918 for example they "hosted an 'Anglo-Chinese Garden Party' that showed the hopes and potential for the relationship between China and the West."[181] Many in Shanghai were likely confounded by this unlikely family unit. After Silas Hardoon died in 1931 members of his family claimed his estate by challenging the legality of his mixed-race marriage. Carter reports "relatives from Baghdad questioned the legitimacy of the marriage altogether" while others invoked Jewish law, Iraqi law, or challenged the jurisdiction of the British. As Carter astutely points out, however, "no one in the case argued that Chinese law was relevant." Even after Silas Hardoon passed away his wife continued to host parties as a celebrated part of the Shanghai community. Just after the death of her husband she hosted her seventieth birthday party, another gathering of Chinese and foreign guests. Hardoon honored her late husband in another show of the couple's eclectic background as "the centerpiece of the celebration was Silas Hardoon's sarcophagus...an impressive monument to the Hardoon's multiculturalism, the black-and-white marble structure was marked in English, Hebrew, and Chinese, with Silas Hardoon's biography inscribed, in gold-leaf Chinese characters, on the surrounding walls."[182] Despite the elaborate birthday festivities, Liza Hardoon led a mostly quiet life after her husband's death. As noted, she endured attempts

[180] Carter, *Champions Day*, 121-123.

[181] Carter, *Champions Day*, 73.

[182] Carter, *Champions Day*, 123-124.

by many to discredit her marriage and sue for her fortune. Ten years after her husband, Liza Hardoon passed away. Carter notes that "the *China Press* called Liza Hardoon's funeral the most elaborate Shanghai had ever seen." In a final nod to her life encountering the many cultures present in Shanghai her funeral was presided over by "Buddhist monks, some of whom had been maintaining a vigil of continuous chanting since her death on October 3, officiated against a backdrop of Western and Chinese instruments and musicians at a ceremony blending Buddhist and Jewish rites."[183] Liza Hardoon's life story is yet another example of the types of cultural exchanges and multicultural identities negotiated and formed by Eurasians.

4. Emily White and Star Talbot 施德之

Emily White and Star Talbot (施德之) claimed in 1935 to be "Shanghai's oldest foreign couple." After fifty years of marriage, *The China Press* announced the celebration of Emily and Star's anniversary.[184] Like the parties of Liza Hardoon, to celebrate, the Talbots invited guests from the Chinese and foreign communities in Shanghai. *The China Press* did not mention however that while both Emily and Star's fathers indeed arrived from Europe to the Chinese coast in the 1860s, both had Chinese mothers. The fifth child born to Seui and Augustus, Emily came from a large and prominent Shanghai Eurasian family. Family sources suggest Seui, who likely passed away before Emily reached the

[183] Carter, *Champions Day*, 225.

[184] "Local Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Date," *The China Press*, May 16, 1935, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

age of ten, arranged her marriage with Star's mother.[185] If their mothers indeed arranged the marriage perhaps, they foresaw a better future for their children if they married a fellow Eurasian. Eight years younger than Star, Emily turned fifteen years old just a few months before the couple wed. On May 15, 1885, on Yuen Ming Yuen Road they began what would become a long-lasting relationship.[186]

Figure 14 (left) "Talbots at Hong Kong Botanical Gardens", 1895, Hong Kong, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

Figure 15 (right) "Augustus White and Family", shared by hoppy_50, s.v "Augustus White", www.ancestry.com

Emily's parents' relationship and life experiences provide further insight into the lives of their children. Emily grew up in a British colonial household and the extent of her mother's influence on her is not fully known. Star's parentage and childhood are more mysterious. The only name of Star's mother, as passed down in family records, is Ta-boo. As reported to a family source by her granddaughter, Ta-boo came from the city of Ningbo, born in 1844.[187] In a profile on Star, Hong reports Star's mother as Cantonese

[185] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

[186] "Local Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Date."

[187] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

and born in Ningbo. Considering Ta-boo's Cantonese background and her birthdate just two years after the opening of the port cities to foreign trade and settlement, it is possible her family migrated from southern China to Ningbo as employees in occupations related to foreign trade. While her real name and the names of her ancestors might be lost to history, Ta-boo is pictured in images passed down and preserved by her descendants. In 1895 she is pictured at the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens standing third from the right with her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. (Figure 14) Hong writes that Star "was very close to the family of his wife" and he likely benefited from the relationships he built with Emily's large Eurasian family.[188] Star is pictured with Emily's family in an image featuring many individuals mentioned in this report.[189] (Figure 15) Considering Emily's mother, stepmother, and two of three of her older sisters passed away when she was young and that she married Star at just the age of fifteen, her mother-in-law Ta-boo probably had a significant influence on Emily. Teng explains that "the idealized form of marriage in Chinese society involved the exogamous exchange of women. Hence, a bride was 'given out' (jia) by her natal family and 'taken in' (qu) by the groom's family. Since a woman belonged to her husband's family after marriage, becoming one of 'his people,' her identity and status were largely determined by his."[190] If their mothers indeed arranged their marriage, Emily and Star likely followed some of the traditional marriage

[188] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 88.

[189] (Figure 11) Ta-boo is standing in the far right, Emily and Star are on the left wearing traditional Chinese clothing, and Augustus is seated in the center with his grandchildren. Also pictured is the Eurasian couple Clara and Augustus seated in the front. Their son Gussie White and Emily and Star's children, including their eldest daughter Mae, are also pictured.

[190] Teng, *Eurasian*, 81.

customs. In 1927 Ta-boo is pictured, now in her eighties, in a family portrait in front of Emily and Star's large Shanghai home. She is seated in the center and surrounded by her family, indicating her status as a family elder. (Figure 16)

Figure 16 "The Talbot Family, 1927", 1927, Shanghai, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

Star, "a child of a British seaman and a Chinese woman from Ningbo" likely did not know his father.[191] Family history sources suggest his father left for Japan and never returned.[192] It was not uncommon for children of Chinese and European parents to be raised without their fathers. Liza Hardoon knew the name of her father but like Star, after

[191] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 88.

[192] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

her father left, she grew up with her Chinese mother. Teng describes several phenomena for the origins of Eurasians in China, including, "the children born to Chinese mothers and foreign merchants, consuls, sailors, and other male sojourners on the China Coast. Many of these children were born from 'temporary alliances.'"[193] Family records state that Star had a sister who died in infancy suggesting his parents' relationship might have lasted at least several years. Writing about the first Eurasians born in the treaty ports, Hall notes that "often they were left behind while their father returned to his own shores or went back to sea, or simply perished in alien climes, unable to adjust to, or accept the changed lifestyle."[194] Perhaps Star's father intended to return to China but met an unlucky fate at sea. Like many Eurasians born in the treaty ports, the origin of Star's mixed background might have been a mystery to him. Raised and supported by his mother, Star attended school and later established himself in the cosmopolitan society of Shanghai.

Star attended Queen's College in Hong Kong and returned to Shanghai by "paying his passage as a stoker and handyman aboard the ship."[195] According to Hong, Star's worked on an American fleet ship as his first occupation.[196] Teng notes many Eurasians from Hong Kong attended Queen's College and that along with the Diocesan Boys' School it "had become the leading institutions for training Hong Kong's Anglophone Chinese elite." Despite the inclusion of Eurasian students "the school

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[193] Teng, *Eurasian*, 26.

[194] Hall, *In the Web*, xi.

[195] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

[196] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 88.

divided students solely on the basis of dress—with those in Chinese dress classed as Chinese, and those in European classed as non-Chinese." Teng notes however that, "the division provided incentive for Eurasians to adopt a Chinese social identity in order to receive the bilingual training that was advantageous in career terms."[197] Star, who spoke Cantonese, Shanghainese, and English, might have attended the Chinese part of the school given his Eurasian background and language skills.[198] Sometime after he attended Queen's College and before his marriage to Emily in 1885 Star moved to Shanghai. Perhaps like his in-laws Seui and Augustus, Star found the discrimination against Eurasians to be worse in Hong Kong than in Shanghai.

Figure 17 anonymous, "Yao Hua Photo Studio", circa 1895, Shanghai, Snow Collection, https://kknews.cc/zh-sg/history/n5oa2m2.html

The article celebrating Emily and Star's fiftieth anniversary reports that around their marriage Star opened a small photography studio on Nanking Road. Literary scholar Leo Ou-fan Lee writes that "if the Bund was the seat of colonial power and finance, Nanking Road, which stretched westward from the Bund, was its commercial

[197] Teng, *Eurasian*, 224-227.

[198] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 93.

extension."[199] Hong reports that an advertisement for Star's photography studio, "first appeared in Shenbao on August 24, 1894. Talbot chose a pro-China name—Yaohua (Glorifying China; Yau Hwa in Cantonese)—for his business."[200] "Photography of China" lists Star by his Chinese name "Shi Dezhi (施德之)" or Si Dak-ji. The website notes the studio "Sze Yuen Ming & Co was known in Chinese as Yao Hua studio (Shangyang Yaohua zhaoxiang 上洋耀華照相)." (Figure 17) The website describes that the photography of the studio "ranged from portraits (notably popular hand-tinted photographs of courtesans) and news pictures, to topographical scenes that suited the tastes of both Chinese and Western communities."[201] (Figures 18 and 19) Figure 18, captioned "Chinese Dinner", features men sitting at a table in the Yao Hua studio, which was "made to look like a tea house, the five men are posed as if having a meal." The image also displays framed photographs of courtesans. Star's studio became known for both coloring images and producing "larger than life prints." Figure 19 captioned "G.L.A.D. & his friends" is a portrait of English journalist Leonard Dudeney and his wife Ellen with their child.[202] These images show the Yao Hua photography studio served both Chinese and foreign customers. By choosing a name for his studio that exalted China, Star intended to attract Chinese business. Indeed, Hong writes that "the Talbots did not

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[199] Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), 15.

[200] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 89.

[201] "Sze-Yuen Ming," Photography of China, 2021, https://photographyofchina.com/blog/sze-yuen-ming.

[202] "Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua Studio)," Historical Photographs of China, 2021, https://www.hpcbristol.net/photographer/sze-yuen-ming-yao-hua-studio.

publicize their English names."[203] On the other hand, located within the International Settlement with the studio's name written in English, Talbot's studio also served foreigners. Clearly, from the establishment of his photography studio Star intended to work with both the Chinese and foreign communities.

Figure 18 (left) "Men Posed in the Yao Hua Studio, Shanghai, with enlarged photographs of courtesans", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, early 1900s, University of Bristol, University of Bristol's "Historical Photographs of China." https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/bk05-06

Figure 19 (right) " Leo and Nellie Dudeney with baby Alvan", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, 1905, University of Bristol, https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/ld01-031

The name printed outside of Star's studio, Sze Yuen Ming, is also a name used by Star. It is not clear what name Star used as a child or what name his parents gave him. Art historian Jennifer Purtle contends that Star "visibly belonged to both Chinese and European worlds" and this is evident, in part, by his aliases.[204] According to Hong, Star "had several Chinese names (e.g., Shi Dezhi, Shi Yuming, and Shi Duzhi), and the best known among them was Shi Dezhi (Sze Tak Chee in Cantonese). Shi is a family name,

[203] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 89.

[204] Jennifer Purtle, "Introduction," in *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from the Treaty Ports to World War II*, ed. Hans Thomsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2009), 10–19.

and Dezhi means to display a charitable virtue."[205] A Shanghai Municipal Council report from 1899 references Star by either his Chinese name or his studio's name, listed as Sze Yuen Ming occupying 11 Foochow Road.[206] A 1905 article from *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* accuses Star of wrongful entry and mentions a dispute he had over a lease and a rent "cheque." The article refers to him as "Sze Yuen-Ming, alias Star Talbot."[207] Records do not reveal whether Shi was the family name of Star's mother or if it is a name he adopted. Teng writes that for Eurasians in China, "the choice of names, like dress, could be part of a familial or individual strategy of survival and social mobility."[208] Given Star's business ventures within both the Chinese and foreign communities in Shanghai, having a European and Chinese name may have proved beneficial. Hong concludes that "the duality of Talbot's geocultural background was a real business asset, helping him rise from a person of no distinction to a celebrity."[209]

By the turn of the century, Star established himself in Shanghai within both the foreign and Chinese communities. In 1901 Star worked with Li Shutong, also known as Hong Yi, an artist and Buddhist monk who moved to Shanghai from Tianjin in 1898. In Shanghai, Li joined the "Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Association," and the

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[205] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 86.

[206] "Municipal Council, Shanghai: Report for the Year Ended 31st December 1898 and Budget for the Year Ending 31st December 1899" (Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1899).

[207] "H. M. SUPREME COURT," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, May 5, 1905, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[208] Teng, *Eurasian*, 241.

[209] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 100-101.

"Shanghai Scholarly Society," later teaching music at a girl's school.[210] Li Shutong and Star likely shared an interest in the many different styles of art present in Shanghai. Together they published the newspaper "Chunjiang huayue bao (Spring River and Flowery Moon)."[211] Later in life, Li taught Western art, music, and art history and is considered the "first teacher of Western music in China."[212] Hong asserts that Star's work with Li led to more publicity for his photography studio. Around that same time, Star's Yao Hua studio gained fame as one of the four "Heavenly Kings" or one of the four largest and well-known photography studios in Shanghai. In 1905, Star hired his eldest daughter Mae Talbot to work at his studio and "provide female customers with a more convenient service." Novelist Li Boyuan wrote two articles in the newspaper *Shijie fanhua bao* (Vanity of the World) about Star's hiring of a female photographer. Referring to Star by his family name of Shi, Li writes:

> Mr. Shi worries about the conservatism in Chinese customs, for women are limited to staying in their homes. They must dress up properly, and they would feel ashamed when they meet men, and especially [think it] improper to touch men's hands. Therefore, no talented female children are allowed to acquire special professions except needlework. But in Europe the situation is very different. There are female lawyers, principals, chief editors, and other professionals. This is why China is weak and foreign powers are strong. This also relates to the balance of peace and unstableness. When Mr. Shi's daughter had grown up, she had already mastered the art of photography, demonstrating the civilization of the Teuton nation. If our Chinese women can all be like Mr. Shi's daughters, will it be a glimpse of hope for the future of China? [213]

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[210] "Master Hong Yi," The Information Office of Hangzhou Municipal People's Government., September 3, 2020, http://www.ehangzhou.gov.cn/2020-09/03/c_271148.htm.

[211] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 90.

[212] "Master Hong Yi."

[213] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 89-90.

Hong contends Li considered Star's biracial background to be a factor in his modern business practices. Li considers the influence of European culture on Star and his daughter Mae, while also viewing Mae as an example for the future of Chinese women. As shown, many in the foreign and Chinese communities recognized his Eurasian background. Star's cultural background also helped him navigate the complicated cosmopolitan yet racially segregated Shanghai community.

By hiring his daughter, Star responded to the changing opportunities for women, especially Chinese women in Shanghai. In the early twentieth century, Shanghai offered women a new cultural experience made possible in part by the Western culture of the International Settlement. For example, Lee contends that the use of women in the new style of advertisements in twentieth-century Shanghai was a consequence of Western influence. Influenced by Western practices, Shanghai experienced an increase in department stores and advertisements geared towards women shoppers. Lee writes that "to many, Shanghai's grandest 'spectacle' was the figurative consumption of women and the commodification of their public image" which "derived ultimately from the presence of the Europeans." Lee quotes film scholar Giuliana Bruno who contends, "going to the cinema thus 'triggered a liberation of the woman's gaze'; and, given the analogy between film viewing and window-shopping, the cinema, like the department store, 'provided a form of access to public space, an occasion to socialize and get out of the house', thus enabling (women) to negotiate, on a new terrain of intersubjectivity the configuration of private/public."[214] By hiring his daughter Mae, Star considered the viewpoint of the

[214] Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 115.

consumers, foreign and Chinese, who increasingly comprised women in the early twentieth century.

In addition to his successful photography studio, Star gained famed and fortune in Shanghai from his pharmaceutical business. In the article celebrating his marriage with Emily, it states that "seeing the possibilities in patent medicine, he branched out into a new field and from a humble beginning, he was soon able to command a large organization."[215] Purtle asserts Star's dual business ventures in photography and pharmaceuticals were not unrelated, writing that "Talbot's involvement with pharmaceuticals necessitated his awareness of graphic design in advertising and packaging design."[216] In his obituary published by the *Jingwu congkan* (Bulletin of Martial Arts), it notes Star owned more than ten enterprises including, "Shengong Jizong Shui (Magic Life-Saving Medicinal Syrup)."[217] Family sources suggest Star developed a medicine intended for Chinese individuals to relieve opium addiction.[218] An article in *The China Press*, written two years after his death describes Star as a "prominent Nanking Road druggist of Sino-British parentage."[219] The article provides further evidence of Star's biracial background as public knowledge within the Shanghai community. An article in *The China Press* from 1931 asserts that his pharmaceutical business allowed

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[215] "Local Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Date."

[216] Purtle, "Introduction," 17.

[217] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise'," 87.

[218] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

[219] "New Charges Against Master Extortionist," *The China Press*, March 23, 1937, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

Star to grow his wealth and that his "special patent medicine" had been on the market for over twenty years. Consistent with his approach with the photography studio, Star's pharmaceutical business adapted to the cosmopolitan Shanghai community. The article, written by Nevada Semenza, also notes that by this time Star had a well-established art collection.[220]

In 1930 Star published a book showcasing his art collection titled, *The Marvellous Book: An Album Containing One Hundred Studies of Famous Chinese Porcelains Reproduced in Full Colors.*[221] Hong explains Star not only made significant contributions to Chinese photography but also, "to the marketing of Chinese art through his trade in *fashu* (classic calligraphic works), *guhua* (antique Chinese painting), and so-called *gu yue xuan* (lit., "ancient moon terrace") ware."[222] At the time the sale of ancient Chinese art or curios grew in popularity among both the Chinese and foreign communities. The 1878 glossary and guide for foreign travels to China defines curio as an "abbreviation for curiosity...commonly used on sign-boards exhibited outside the shops of Chinese tradesmen in this particular line who desire to attract foreign customers. 'The vendor of small and second-hand curios, exposes upon some door-steps his brass trinkets, his vases, his little snuff bottles, and a multitude of trifling articles..."[223] Semenza's article on Star's

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[220] Nevada Semenza, "Purchase of Two-Dollar Vase Starts Shanghai Man on Track to Amass A Huge Art Collection Which He Now Values At More Than $10,000,000.," *The China Press*, October 24, 1931, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

[221] Star Talbot, *The Marvellous Book: An Album Containing One Hundred Studies of Famous Chinese Porcelains Reproduced in Full Colors* (Shanghai: S. Talbot & Sons, 1930).

[222] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 85.

[223] Herbert, *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 33.

art collection, titled "Purchase of Two-Dollar Vase Starts Shanghai Man on Track to Amass A Huge Art Collection Which He Now Values At More Than $10,000,000" shows how Star wanted his collection to be perceived, as even in the title it notes that it was Star himself who valued his collection at such a high worth.[224] However, Hong calls into question the claims made by Star about his antique collection. Hong writes, "as a Eurasian, he kept abreast of the new trends of a global market for *guhua*. Apparently in the West during the 1910s and 1920s, the older the *guhua* was, the higher its market value would be…that trend also enticed Talbot to relabel all sorts of fakes and misattributed pieces with ancient dates and big names."[225] In addition to misattributing works of art to famous artists and mislabeling dates, Star also invented a fictitious artist he claimed reigned from the Tang Dynasty. Star may have used his bicultural background to his advantage in business ventures. Conceivably, Star sought to trick foreign buyers by inventing knowledge of ancient Chinese art. Regardless of the veracity of Star's claims his art collection contributed to his notoriety in Shanghai.

From the opening of Shanghai to foreign trade and settlement, settlers exhibited national and colonial identities. Over time a blend of local and colonial Shanghailander identity developed, mostly among the British settler community. However, many in Shanghai continued to identify themselves with their or their ancestor's country of origin. According to Teng, Eurasians often merely by their appearance occupied an "'ambiguous

[224] Semenza, "Purchase of Two-Dollar Vase"

[225] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 95-96.

and uncertain status."[226] While Star is identified as Eurasian in the press, it is not certain that he presented himself as Eurasian publicly or within social circles. Given his many different names including both the British family name of Talbot and the Chinese family name of Shi, Star may have presented himself differently depending on the company. Many Eurasians claimed Chinese nationality and identified with Chinese culture and traditions. Prominent Hong Kong businessman Robert Ho Tung (何東), like Star, is known by both a Chinese and European name. Teng's investigation of how Robert Ho Tung claimed or exhibited his Chinese heritage is useful in considering Emily and Star's cultural identity.

As successful businessmen and active members of their communities, Star and Robert Ho Tung are among the more renowned Chinese Eurasians. Both men exhibited practices linked to their European and Chinese cultural backgrounds. Teng writes that "central to Ho Tung's 'claiming Chineseness' was his public role as a philanthropist and supporter of political causes. Ho Tung's business success, wealth, and charitable donations allowed him to become a leader of the Hong Kong Chinese community as well as an important representative to the British of 'Chinese sentiment.'"[227] Likewise, Star did not limit himself to business, as noted he was part of the art scene in Shanghai and worked with Chinese artist Li Shutong. Like Robert Ho Tung, Star took part in community organizations. For example, he joined and later chaired the Martial Arts Association, which according to Hong was "founded by Cantonese in 1909." Hong

[226] Teng, *Eurasian*, 205.

[227] Teng, *Eurasian*, 210.

reports that upon Star's death in 1935 the *Jingwu congkan* (Bulletin of Martial Arts) published his obituary which "portrayed him as a native Cantonese entrepreneur, philanthropist, and art connoisseur." Hong further notes that in his obituary Star is "primarily remembered not in the Shanghai antiques circle, but through a network of the Martial Arts Association." Further demonstrating Star's prominence in the Chinese community in Shanghai the Chinese newspaper *Shenbao* announced his death and funeral services which were held, according to Hong, "in the Hall of Overseas Cantonese (Chinese) (Yueqiao shangye lianhe huitang) and was attended by Chu Minyi (1884–1946), who was the chairman-elect of the Martial Arts Association, and Li Dachao (b. 1901), the representative of Wu Tiecheng (1888–1953), a native Cantonese and the mayor of Shanghai."[228] Referenced as a Eurasian and by his English name in English newspapers and as Cantonese in a Chinese bulletin, Star's cultural identity appears fluid.

Figure 20 (left) "Emily Talbot Portrait", private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood.

Figure 21 (right) "The Talbot Family, 1907", 1907, Shanghai, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

[228] Hong, "'An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise,'" 87-88.

In addition to joining Chinese organizations, Teng writes that "dress also provided a means through which Ho Tung signified his Chinese identification. Although he had worn European clothes in his youth, as an adult Ho was known for always wearing traditional Chinese clothes, and usually Chinese shoes and a skullcap. He also wore the queue before the Revolution of 1911, as did his eldest sons."[229] Like Star, Ho Tung and his brothers attended Queen's College in Hong Kong and based on their dress were assigned to the Chinese section of the school. In a cosmopolitan yet racially segregated society, aside from physical appearances, individuals dress functioned as one of the first markers of their cultural identity. Referencing the work of the American sociologist, Teng writes that, "as Lamson documented in his research on the American community in Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s, few Westerners, aside from the occasional missionary, adopted local dress in China."[230] Pictures of Emily and Star passed down by their descendants provide further evidence of their cultural identity. Considered Western or foreign by *The China Press,* Star as a young adult and Emily throughout her life are pictured wearing Chinese clothing. At the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens in 1895, Emily, Star, Ta-boo, and three of Emily and Star's children are pictured wearing Chinese clothing. (Figure 14) Star is bald and a family source indicates he had a "pigtail" or queue.[231] While Star is later pictured with a full head of hair and a mustache, he possibly followed the rule during the Qing Dynasty that "all Chinese males were compelled to

[229] Teng, *Eurasian*, 210.

[230] Teng, *Eurasian*, 92.

[231] Gensburger, "A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family."

shave the front of their heads and wear their hair in a single plait, or 'queue.'"[232] Emily and Ta-boo are pictured in clothing typical of a wealthy Chinese woman at the time, a style similar to the description of the *ao* in *Chinese Clothing: An Illustrated Guide* by Valery Garrett who writes, "the woman's *ao* was cut very large, reaching to the calf, with wide sleeves. Bulky garments, like those worn by men in the Ming dynasty, were a sign of wealth and dignity."[233] The picture could have been staged by Star who had already opened his photography studio. Their choice of dress may be due to their visit to Hong Kong or a special occasion for the picture. Emily is pictured throughout her life nearly always in Chinese dress. A portrait of her later in life shows some of the changes in fashion, reflecting what Garrett describes that by 1912, "the *ao* became slimmer and longer, reaching to below the knee; sleeves were narrow to the wrists; the side slits were short, reaching to the lower hip, and all the edges of the *ao* were trimmed with narrow braid, instead of the wide bands of the embroidery which had been popular in the past. The collar was high, as high as it would ever be, and sometimes had the corners turned down."[234] (Figure 20) In most pictures of Star later in his life, he is wearing a Western-style suit. Garrett describes how, "by the end of the nineteenth century, Western influences had even begun to affect clothing traditions for men involved in commerce and industry." And, after the fall of the Qing Dynasty government officials were required to wear Western dress. Influenced by the Western presence in Shanghai and changing

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[232] Valery M. Garrett, *Chinese Clothing: An Illustrated Guide* (Hong Kong ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 30.

[233] Garrett, *Chinese Clothing*, 87.

[234] Garrett, *Chinese Clothing*, 102-103.

trends generally, in most pictures Star unlike Emily dressed in Western style. In a family portrait from 1907 the Talbots are pictured wearing clothing that appear more Western than Chinese. (Figure 21) Star and his eldest son James are pictured wearing Western suits. Emily and her older daughters Mae and Frances are wearing Western-style dresses that contrast with Emily's clothing in other pictures. Like the picture from the Hong Kong Botanical Gardens this family portrait is staged and therefore their clothing may be atypical. The pictures suggest that the Talbots, especially Emily, wore both Western and Chinese clothing. Pictured much later in life, Emily continued to dress consistent with Chinese fashion for women even among her family which increasingly wore Western clothing. (Figures 22 and 23) Unlike Star, historical records do not provide much insight into the cultural identity of Emily. However, her dress which at times contrasts with relatives signified her identification with the culture of her mother and mother-in-law.

Figure 22 (left) "Emily Talbot and Family", private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

Figure 23 (right) "Emily Talbot", private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

Star's upbringing followed a pattern familiar to many Eurasian children raised by their Chinese mothers. Emily on the other hand grew up in a British colonial household and yet retained some of the cultural traditions of her mother. Star's notoriety in Shanghai further reveals how being Eurasian could simultaneously be a hindrance to business and a benefit in expanding his business options. A noted art collector, druggist, and photography studio owner Star, well-known in the foreign communities, nonetheless is often referenced by his mixed background. Within the Cantonese martial arts community Star is remembered as Cantonese. Emily and Star represent how being Eurasian shaped their lives, whether in their presented cultural identity or how others identified their backgrounds. Emily and Star's contrasting upbringings and different cultural markers showcase the variety of experiences amongst Eurasians in Shanghai.

5. Lei Wai-Saan 李慧珊 and Ho Fook 何福

Prejudice against Eurasians in the treaty ports is evidenced by the erasure of family history. Even within families, individuals hid truths about their parents and grandparents. The Ollerdessen family is representative of the many Eurasian families who hid the origins of their mixed backgrounds by identifying themselves as Westerners in China. Frank Cecil Roberts, a Eurasian man born in Hong Kong, provides another example of how individuals and families obscured or hid their backgrounds. Furthermore, Frank and his siblings' upbringings uncover another aspect of the origins of the Eurasian community in China. Frank born to a Eurasian mother in Hong Kong named Lei Wai-Saan (李慧珊), later settled in Shanghai. At the time of Frank's birth Wai-Saan subsisted

as a concubine. It was common for wealthy Chinese men in the nineteenth century to marry multiple wives and have concubines. Wai-Saan, the concubine of a Hong Kong Eurasian man named Ho Fook (**何福**), previously maintained relationships with at least two European men including Charles Roberts and Ernst Fuhrmann. Only sixteen years old when Roberts "protected" Wai-Saan, she likely had little agency in entering in the relationship.[235] Author Vicky Lee explains the origins of the term "protected woman" writing that it "originated in the nineteenth century under the Hong Kong government's system of licensing brothels and suppressing unlicensed establishments. When a woman was suspected of being a prostitute or of operating a brothel, she could escape the regulations governing prostitutes by producing a certificate to show that she was protected by a foreigner." The arrangement usually involved a man financially supporting a "protected" woman, but the men rarely recognized the children produced in these relationships. Lee explains how these temporary relationships between Chinese women and European men led to a silencing of family history. Lee writes, "one main reason for the code of silence was probably the issue of illegitimacy arising from the morally unconventional practice of the forebears of most early Hong Kong Eurasians. Eurasian progeny from temporary relationships between a Chinese protected woman and her European protector were 'tangible evidence of moral irregularity.'"[236] Children born of these temporary relationships were often denied information about their family history.

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[235] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 59-60.

[236] Vicky Lee, "The Code of Silence across the Hong Kong Eurasian Community(Ies)," in *Meeting Place: Encounters across Cultures in Hong Kong, 1841–1984*, ed. Elizabeth Sinn and Christopher Munn (Hong Kong University Press, n.d.), 41–63, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1zqrn35.8, 53.

Figure 24 (left) "Ho Fook", 1908, from Arnold Wright, Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and Other Treaty Ports of China (London Lloyd's Greater Britain Pub. Co, 1908), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ho_Fook.png

Figure 25 (middle) "Frank Roberts c.1920", from Eric Ho, Tracing My Children's Lineage (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong, 2010), 245.

Figure 26 (right) "Dad and Algy, Shanghai 1941", from Eric Ho, Tracing My Children's Lineage (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong, 2010), 244

It is probable Wai-Saan became a "protected woman", consistent with Lee's definition, to avoid punishment for prostitution. How Wai-Saan came to be a "protected woman" as a teenager in Hong Kong is unknown but likely suggests she experienced childhood trauma. In her work on prostitution in Shanghai, historian Gail Hershatter explains how some women became sex workers: "a woman's entry into prostitution thus usually was marked by family crisis and sometimes accomplished by outright violence, which removed her from whatever protection her family could offer."[237] Wai-Sann's son Archibald Roberts reported to Hall that his maternal grandmother came from Canton

[237] Gail Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution, 1870-1949," *Modern China* 15, no. 4 (October 1989): 463–98, https://doi.org/10.1177/009770048901500403, 478.

(Guangzhou) born around 1846 and living until 1917.[238] If Archibald did know his maternal grandmother, perhaps she cared for Wai-Saan and her children in Hong Kong. If Wai-Saan indeed operated as a sex worker as a teenager in Hong Kong she perhaps shared the wish, articulated by Hershatter, that "when prostitutes imagined life outside the brothel system at all, they imagined becoming the wives or concubines of rich men."[239] Before her relationship with Fook, between 1887 and 1889, Wai-Saan had two children with the European man Charles Roberts and in 1891 she had a child with another European man and their son Archibald took the last name Roberts to correspond with his brothers. In 1894, Wai-Saan had her first child with Fook, the author Eric Peter Ho's father Ho Sai Ki (何世奇). A year later, she gave birth to Frank. Ho reports that "according to my cousin Maggie Cheung, Frank was probably my Grandfather's [Fook's] son. At any rate, at the time of Frank's birth, Grandfather was abroad, so Frank's surname followed Archibald's precedent. However, there was a strong facial resemblance between Uncle Frank and my father."[240] (Figures 24, 25, and 26) Unlike Sai Ki and Wai-Saan and Fook's other children, Frank did not take the family Ho name and instead took the family name of his half-siblings, Roberts. Frank's reasoning for taking the name Roberts is unknown. However, Ho explains how many Eurasians had to adopt Chinese family names or devise a Chinese family name that resembled their European father's family name. Ho explains, "a Chinese child acquires his father's surname, *chung fu juk* (

[238] Hall, *In the Web*, 104.

[239] Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution", 488.

[240] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 60.

從父族)… Furthermore, the decision has to be taken with the first born."[241] It is probable Wai-Saan chose the last name Roberts for Archibald and Frank to match their eldest brother, Walter, the son of Charles Roberts. Frank's last name could indicate he is not the son of Fook as suggested by the author Ho. Frank's life story further exposes how Eurasian and mixed-race families concealed their histories as Frank's descendants did not know or disclose his parentage to their children. Wai-Saan and Fook reveal the contrasting experiences of Eurasians in Hong Kong. Fook and his siblings became prominent members of the Hong Kong community as they grew their wealth and status. And Lee asserts that Wai-Saan "in many ways represents the experience of a Eurasian female from the social margins of earlier colonial days."[242]

Figure 27 "Li Wai-san, Ho Fook's Concubine" from Eric Ho, Tracing My Children's Lineage (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong, 2010), 79

[241] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 44.

[242] Vicky Lee, "Eurasian Reflections Across Two Generations," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 57 (2017): 238.

Despite having children with Fook beginning in 1894, Wai-Saan (Figure 27) did not live in the Ho household until she was officially recognized as his concubine in 1902. Her experiences as a mother of five children living on her own in Hong Kong is mostly unknown. As a "protected woman" of two Western men, it is likely Wai-Saan and her children received some financial support from her children's fathers. Lee notes how some "protected women" in Hong Kong considered their position to be better off than that of other Chinese women as they were "far better treated by their foreign protectors, than the legitimate first wife of a well-to-do Chinamen is treated by her husband or her mother-in-law." As noted, Wai-Saan's son Archibald recalled his maternal grandmother living until 1917, perhaps staying with her daughter in Hong Kong. Historical sources do not reveal any information on Wai-Saan's mother or family. Lee reports that facing prejudice, "protected women…often supported one another and lived together in a neighborhood of Hong Kong."[243] It is possible Wai-Saan relied on a similar network of support. In 1900, Wai-Saan gave birth to a daughter Nancy, who became sickly as a young child. Ho reports after Nancy fell ill Wai-Saan was allowed to move into Fook's household. Ho's father Sai Ki just seven years old when "his mother was formally admitted into the Ho family as a concubine" may have felt ostracized from his father, his father's wife, and his half-siblings. A year younger than Sai Ki, Wai-Saan's son Frank most likely did not live with his mother once she became a concubine. Frank's childhood experiences and that of his half-siblings remains relatively mysterious. It is likely they grew up without their fathers and at least partially estranged from their mother. Perhaps Frank's older Roberts

[243] Lee, "The Code of Silence" 55-56.

brothers Archibald, Sonny, and Walter cared for their younger brother. Wai-Saan may have depended on her mother or network of "protected women" in Hong Kong to help care for her children who did not live in the Ho household. Wai-Saan continued to live in the Ho household after Fook's death in 1926 and remained there until the beginning of World War II when she moved into her son Archibald's home.[244] Wai-Saan's granddaughter, Walter's daughter Constance, remembered her grandmother sending her gifts from Hong Kong and occasionally visiting her family in Shanghai. While she did not know her well, Constance describes her grandmother Wai-Saan as a "sweet ol' soul."[245]

Frank's nephew, the author Eric Peter Ho, describes being denied full knowledge of his family's history. In the opening chapter of his book Ho describes how, consistent with Chinese tradition, his family practiced ancestral worship honoring ancestors with family photographs displayed on an altar table. The author notes that while his grandfather Fook passed away before he was born, "his wife, concubine, two sons and daughters-in-law, unmarried daughters and some grandchildren continued to live in an extended family environment." Ho writes his family spoke Cantonese and observed Chinese festivals and customs. Like Frank, Ho's father Sai Ki married a Eurasian woman. Frank's children, like Ho, had four Eurasian grandparents. Considering his family's Chinese identity Ho writes, "some Eurasians realised that their community was so small that it would be difficult for it to maintain a separate existence. There was also a

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[244] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 60.

[245] Constance E. Dunton, Transcription, interview by Cherise Y. Teeson and Charlyne Broderick, November 1996, private collection of Tiffany Maloney, 39.

realisation they would never be accepted by the British elite as their equals. They therefore identified themselves with the Chinese and tried in every way to be as 'Chinese' as possible." Like Poston, Ho remembers how he discovered his mixed background. Unlike the Ollerdessens who identified themselves as European, the Hos identified and presented themselves as Chinese. Ho's story of discovery further demonstrates the discrimination Eurasians endured. Entering school at the age of six at St. Joseph's College, Ho found he was already identified as different from his Chinese peers. Ho writes:

> I first discovered that I was somehow different - an Eurasian - when I was six...My assailant suddenly uttered a string of expletives, and said that he would beat up the half-caste. Fortunately, my otherwise streetwise assailant was not efficient at fisticuffs, and I managed to dodge his blows to escape into the sanctuary of the classroom. Apart from the trauma of this piece of unprovoked aggression, I do not recall being hurt in any physical sense. Of course, I did not at the time understand the meaning of half-caste, or the string of expletives used by the bully. Furthermore, I found that my parents were not very communicative on the subject. The clear message I did get was that the word Eurasian was to be eschewed as being somewhat shameful and offensive.

Over time Ho learned about his European great grandparents. The author notes that first-generation Eurasians established gravesites called, "*yee gwoon choong* (衣冠塚)." These gravesites honored the European fathers of Eurasian children as placeholders. Some graves remained empty as the fathers, like Ho's great grandfather Charles Bosman, left his family to return to Europe where he passed away. Often families crafted the European father a Chinese name "to be used on family ancestral tablets and tombstones." Ho's family inscribed his paternal great-grandfather Charles Bosman's grave with the name Ho Si-man (何仕文) and his maternal great-grandfather Thomas Rothwell's grave read

Lo Fu-wah (羅富華). Ho shows the extent to which Eurasian families hid information about their ancestry. In his book, Ho considers his family's history and his Eurasian identity. Again, reflecting on his family's choice to identify as Chinese, Ho recalls the words of his maternal grandfather Lo Cheung-siu (羅長肇) who told him "*hang yan tau ho gwoh gun gwei mei* (行人頭好過近鬼尾)" which Ho translates to "walking in front with men (Chinese) is better than following behind the foreign devils"[246] In the preface Ho explains he compiled his book because his "children are entitled to know their origins" and he aimed to "write our history to the best of my ability, warts and all."[247]

It cannot be established that the "protected women" of European men, like Wai-Saan, Ho's grandmother and Frank's mother, all began as sex workers, but many Chinese women did meet foreign men through sex work. Edward Henderson, the "Surgeon to the Municipality and Officer of Health" wrote a report on prostitution in Shanghai in 1871 revealing twenty-seven "houses frequented by foreigners."[248] Henderson, reporting from a Western perspective, notes "foreigners occasionally purchase their native mistresses from the brothel-keepers or other agents, paying sums varying from three to seven hundred dollars; instances of foreigners selling these women again are, I believe unknown."[249] As shown, not all of these relationships were transactional, but many were

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[246] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 5-12.

[247] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, v.

[248] Edward Henderson, "A Report on Prostitution in Shanghai : Drawn up for the Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai" (North-China Herald Office, 1871), Royal College of Surgeons, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/mnfq4j68, 11.

[249] Henderson, "A Report on Prostitution in Shanghai", 7.

limited to a temporary affair. Many of the Eurasian children born of temporary relationships did not know their fathers. Further, women who entered or were forced into sex work often came from lower-class backgrounds and lost support and connection with their families. Hershatter concludes that "very little is known about how the prostitutes regarded their work or themselves."[250] The life of Fook's mother, a woman named Shi Tai (施娣) provides a glimpse into the experiences of a Chinese woman forced into sex work. Unlike many other Chinese women negotiating cultural exchanges with Western men in the treaty ports, Tai left behind a historical record preserving her memory.

Figure 28"Madame Si", Painted portrait of Madame Si, mother of Robert Hotung, c. 1900, Eric Hotung, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madame_Si2.jpg

Ho tells how tragedy befell the Shi family leading to the estrangement of young Tai. The cover of *Tracing My Children's Lineage* features a portrait of his great-grandmother (Figure 28), and the author details her life in a chapter of his book. Evidenced by her bound feet, Tai came from a relatively wealthy family. Ho reports Tai

[250] Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution", 486.

to have been born in 1841 on Tsungming Island (Chongming), less than one hundred kilometers north of Shanghai. Ho writes, "after her father died, and blight killed the mulberry trees that supported the family's silk business, her uncles sold her in Shanghai." Tai's experience of being sold by her family can only be imagined, as Ho speculates, "it must have been terrifying to have been snatched away, alone. She must have cried her eyes out, but we cannot be sure whether she tried to fight off her abductors, to escape - but to where?"[251] Hershatter explains the lack of agency for women in this type of predicament, writing that "women who were sold or pawned, and those who were cut off by traffickers from the protection of family or native-place networks, had very little control over the circumstances of their working lives. Their owners had claims on them that far exceeded the boundaries of employer-employee relationships."[252] The details of Tai's life in Shanghai are unknown. Removed from her family as a child, Tai certainly endured tremendous hardship.

Somehow as a teenager Tai relocated from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Ho contends Tai experienced culture shock in Hong Kong not only by the cultural dominance of the British but also by the vast number of Cantonese speakers, a language "quite unlike her native Shanghai dialect."[253] In Hong Kong, Tai became the "protected woman" of a Dutchman named Charles Bosman. Teng writes that Charles, who arrived in Hong Kong in 1859, worked as a partner in the shipping firm of Cornelius Koopmanschap which

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[251] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 42-43.

[252] Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution", 478.

[253] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 43.

"shipped goods and laborers between China and San Francisco." Teng contends "Bosman upheld the colonial taboo against interracial marriage, following instead the accepted custom of taking a local companion to provide him with the comforts of home."[254] Ho concludes "for better or for worse, she [Tai] became 'protected' by C.H.M. Bosman, and motherhood inevitably followed." Between 1861 and 1867 Tai and Charles had five children together. Ho discusses how Tai and Charles gave their children the family name of Ho. The author considers family lore that Tai copied the name of a fellow tenant in her building or that Ho was the family name of one of her children, Ho Kom-tong (何甘棠), whose father was Chinese or Eurasian. However, Ho asserts the most likely scenario involved Tai following the Chinese tradition of a child acquiring their father's name and the family name Ho "derived from his place of origin, Holland." Ho details how Bosman, despite their supposed arrangement, did not provide adequate support for Tai and their children. Their children remembered waiting outside their father's office during hard times to obtain housekeeping money. Additionally, the author reveals Tai gave up her son Ho Moon (何滿) for adoption to a wealthy family from Macao due to financial difficulties. Finally, Ho reports that Tai and Charles's son Ho Tung (何東), also known as Robert, found his mother distraught one day about to commit suicide. Robert learned Tai had gambled away money she had saved for his wedding, but he convinced his mother not to take her own life.[255] By 1868, Charles disappeared from Hong Kong and no

[254] Teng, *Eurasian*, 119.

[255] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 44-49.

longer provided any support to Tai. Discussing the experiences of "protected women" Lee writes that "if the protector made no provision after he left, some woman, destitute, might become concubines of Chinese men." Lee cites both Tai and Wai-Saan as examples of "protected women" abandoned by their foreign protector who later entered into wealthy Chinese families as concubines.[256] In 1868, Tai "became the fourth concubine of Kwok Hing-yin (郭興賢), a cattle merchant." She could not bring her young children with her into the Kwok household and so they lived separately.[257] Nonetheless, her children with Charles, including Frank's supposed father Fook, became some of the wealthiest and most well-known Eurasians in Hong Kong.

Tai and Charles' children showcase not only the experiences of Eurasians in nineteenth-century Hong Kong but also how being the children of a concubine affected their upbringing. Tai's granddaughter Irene Cheng explains the status of concubines, writing, "the concubine, depending on personal taste and circumstances, might either reside in the wife's household or be housed elsewhere. In either case, she would on all festival days pay her respects to the principal wife. Her status was halfway between that of a member of the family and a respected servant."[258] Cheng speculates that growing up in this type of familial arrangement left "deep emotional scars, especially on the children."[259] Writing about Tai's eldest son Robert, Lee writes that "growing up in his

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[256] Lee, "The Code of Silence", 54.

[257] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 46.

[258] Irene Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady, Her Family and Her Times* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1976), xvii.

[259] Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung*, iv.

Chinese mother's household, he was very much imbued with Chinese culture and customs."[260] Exploring the lives of Tai's Eurasian children, it seems they fit the category of Eurasians who, according to Lee, "were mostly absorbed into the Chinese community", writing further "they saw themselves as Chinese, adopted Chinese names, spoke Chinese, and followed a Chinese lifestyle. Normally they wore Chinese clothes and, before 1911, a queue. They married according to Chinese custom a kit fat 結髮 (principal) wife and sometimes took concubines."[261] Despite being a well-known Eurasian, Teng concludes the image Robert "crafted for himself was essentially that of a Chinese gentleman."[262] And keeping with Chinese cultural tradition, Tai arranged her daughters' marriages as an alliance between families. The contrasting biographies of Tai's sons and daughters expose the limited opportunities available to Eurasian women in Hong Kong.

All of Tai's male children attended school in Hong Kong affording them economic opportunities later in life. About her father Cheng writes, "families which identified themselves with the Chinese usually sent their sons first to Chinese schools where the curriculum was based on a study of Confucian classics. After some years in such a school, by which time they had acquired a working knowledge of written Chinese, the boys would enter the Government Central School, which was the predecessor of

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[260] Lee, *Being Eurasian*, 28.

[261] Lee, "The Code of Silence", 43.

[262] Teng, *Eurasian*, 209.

Queen's College."[263] As noted, the Eurasian Star Talbot also attended Queen's College before making his career in medicine and photography in Shanghai. In 1884 one of Tai's sons Yau-kai (何佑偕), known by his English name Walter as an adult, earned a scholarship to study engineering in England. Walter would be the only child of Tai to marry a Westerner and he made his living as an engineer for the Natal Government Railway in South Africa.[264] By all accounts, Tai's daughters, like many Eurasian girls, did not have access to the same education as their brothers. Tai's Eurasian daughter Pak-ngan (何柏頤), born in 1861, by the age of fifteen became the sixth concubine to Tsoi Sing-nam (蔡星南), a Eurasian businessman from Guangzhou who worked with Pak-ngan's brothers Fook and Robert. Pak-ngan had two children with Tsoi Sing-nam and returned to Hong Kong to live with her mother after his death. Pak-ngan's story reveals the vast differences between the experiences of childhood, education, and marriage for female and male Eurasians in Hong Kong. [265] Women in Hong Kong had little control over who they married, a decision that impacted women much more than men. Pak-ngan likely had little choice in moving to Guangzhou at age fifteen and becoming a mother.

Fook and his brothers made their lives and careers in Hong Kong. After attending Queen's College, Fook and Robert began working as compradors for Western companies. A comprador is defined by Herbert as a "negotiator of purchases...the name given to the

[263] Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung*, xvi.

[264] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 151-155.

[265] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 89-90.

Chinese agent" working for foreign merchants in China.[266] Knowledge of language and cultural customs helped the compradors initiate the cultural and economic exchanges between Western and Chinese businesses and businessmen. Eurasians were perhaps the best suited individuals for the task. With experience studying English and Chinese and exposure to both Western and Chinese cultures, Eurasians used these skills to navigate cultural exchanges in the Hong Kong and Shanghai business worlds. The culture of the comprador, according to Bergère, became a hybrid culture combining Western and Chinese practices. The author notes that this hybrid culture is evident by the clothes they wore and the languages they spoke. Bergère describes the comprador wardrobes, writing that "long silk robes would hang beside European-style suits and Chinese skull caps would be stacked alongside Western headgear." The author further reports that the compradors, in business settings, spoke a pidgin English, "a language that combined Chinese sentence structure with an Anglo-Indian or Portuguese vocabulary."[267] From 1888 until 1891 Fook worked as a comprador for the Hongkong & Kowloon Wharf & Godown Company before joining his brother Robert at Jardine Matheson & Co. Historian John Carroll asserts that "by the end of the nineteenth century, compradors were among the richest men in China - not just in the treaty ports but in all of China."[268] Robert and Fook are perhaps some of the best representatives of Hong Kong compradors using the position to grow their wealth and status. Carroll reports Robert was "a millionaire by the

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[266] Herbert, *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East*, 30.

[267] Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity,* 107.

[268] John M Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Harvard University Press, 2005), https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674029231, 33.

age of thirty, he was a financier, property and steamship owner with interests in shipping and insurance, and import-export merchant. Ho was generally believed to be the wealthiest man in Hong Kong and was associated with practically every large business in the colony, either as shareholder or director." While his brother is the more well-known Hong Kong Eurasian businessman, Fook later established, "Ho Fook and Company - a firm that transported sugar between Hong Kong and Chinese ports."[269] Carroll further notes that as compradors grew their wealth, they became more influential within Hong Kong. In addition to serving as "intermediaries between the colonial government and the Chinese population" they also became leading philanthropists and influential in social affairs.[270]

Figure 29"Prominent members of the Hong Kong Chinese community", 1908, from Arnold Wright, Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and Other Treaty Ports of China (London Lloyd's Greater Britain Pub. Co, 1908), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Fil

[269] Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 79-80.

[270] Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 35.

Arnold Wright's 1908 *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and other Treaty Ports of China* features an image (Figure 29) titled "Prominent Members of the Chinese and Hong Kong Community." Displayed in the image are Fook (#17), Robert (#7), and Kom-tong (#20), as well as other Eurasian businessmen.[271] Written for a Western audience, the Eurasian Ho brothers are presented as Chinese members of the Hong Kong community. As discussed, Teng argues that part of Robert's "'claiming Chineseness' was his public role as a philanthropist and supporter of political causes."[272] Robert and his brothers' charity work contributed to their renown in Hong Kong and is well-documented. While their philanthropic activities likely contributed, as asserted by Teng, to their "Chineseness" it also indicates the Ho brothers' Eurasian identification. Robert for example supported both European and Chinese causes. He donated ambulances and airplanes to the British government during World War I and in the 1920s "sponsored a round-table conference inviting the warlords in China to settle their differences face to face."[273] Robert and other Eurasians also challenged the segregation practiced in colonial Hong Kong. For example, Carroll reports that "barred from the Hong Kong Club, several prominent Chinese and Eurasians formed their own club in 1899: The Chinese Club." Robert and Kom-tong were among the founding members of the Chinese Club.[274] Showcasing the segregation in Hong Kong and how Eurasians were

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[271] Arnold Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and Other Treaty Ports of China* (London Lloyd's Greater Britain Pub. Co, 1908), 183.

[272] Teng, *Eurasian*, 210.

[273] Lee, *Being Eurasian*, 29.

[274] Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 100.

often excluded from the dual categories of Chinese and foreigner, Wright considers "what the Hong Kong Club is to Europeans the Chinese Club is to the Chinese."[275] In 1900, Robert donated money for the foundation of a school in Kowloon to be open to all races. However, Carroll reports the government persuaded him "to let the school be used only for European students. Ho Tung reluctantly agreed, regretting a decision 'so opposed to the spirit which prompted my offer of the school to the Colony'"[276] Robert's wife Clara was also active in social causes in Hong Kong, founding the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist temple and Po Kok Vocational Middle School for Girls.[277] In 1915, Robert and Fook were named as trustees of the Chiu Yuen Cemetery (昭遠墳場) at Mount Davis in Hong Kong for the exclusive use for the Hong Kong Eurasian community.[278] And, in 1930 Robert and other prominent Hong Kong Eurasians founded the Welfare League "for the purpose of relief and succour of the needy in the Eurasian community."[279] The Ho brothers reveal how despite facing obstacles related directly to their mixed-race background, Eurasians in Hong Kong were able to achieve wealth and status.

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[275] Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions*, 172.

[276] Carroll, *Edge of Empires,* 89-90.

[277] Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung*, xii.

[278] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 68.

[279] Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 348.

6. Clara Talbot and Frank Roberts

Bickers contends that "war made Shanghai."[280] The historian's theory is based in part on the consequences of the Opium Wars and the resulting Treaty of Nanking allowing foreign trade and settlement along the Chinese coast and further based on the Taiping Rebellion which led to further colonial influence in Shanghai. However, if war made Shanghai, in a very different context and time war also brought about the end of Shanghai's International Settlement dispersing most Shanghai Eurasians across the globe. World War I did not affect the Pacific Coast of China nearly as much as World War II; however, the initial multinational conflict nonetheless impacted China and its Shanghai residents. The first World War pitted many foreigners in Shanghai, previously united by local identity and economic interests, against one another in the name of national pride. Foreign residents of China, including Eurasians, served in European forces on the battlefront. Many Chinese served the French and British armies as laborers.[281] The Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended World War I, also caused a growth in anti-colonialism in China and particularly in Shanghai. The treatment of China by Western powers in the Treaty of Versailles, granting formerly German-controlled Chinese land to Japan, outraged many Chinese. Political movements increasingly challenged and protested the foreign extraterritoriality rights. Despite its tenuous presence amid growing political opposition, the International Settlement existed through the 1920s and 1930s. However, the Japanese occupation of Shanghai in 1937, the internment of foreign

[280] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 130.

[281] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 276.

residents after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the Chinese Communist Revolution eventually led to the formal ending of foreign extraterritoriality and the dislocation of most Shanghai Eurasians.

Not much is known about the upbringing of Frank Roberts, a Eurasian man born in Hong Kong in 1895. Despite his murky background, records show Frank served in World War I in the British 10th regiment and 19th battalion consisting of men from Shanghai's International Settlement.[282] In *Getting Stuck in Shanghai,* Bickers details the experiences of the Shanghai men serving the British army during World War I. Historian Betty Wei asserts that, like Frank, "many young residents of Shanghai left for their native countries to do military service in a burst of romantic patriotism."[283] Of course, unlike his peers, Frank did not return to his native country as he was born in Hong Kong. Frank's service in World War I suggests he, and perhaps his father, held British citizenship. Without a known birth record, it is also possible Frank falsified information about his parentage and used his British surname to hide his mixed background. His half-brother Archibald suggests Frank joined the army due to a lack of other options. Archibald describes the nineteen-year-old Frank as "a terrible chap" and reports he "used to carry guns into China, where many times he ran into trouble." Archibald says Frank took the advice of fellow Eurasians, James Anderson and Henry Cumine, who "told him he might as well go and fight for the British army in Europe, as he was no use where he was."[284] It

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[282] Robert Bickers, "The Suwa Maru Contingent," *Robert Bickers History, Empire, China, and Things Found on the Way* (blog), n.d., https://robertbickers.net/books/getting-stuck-in-for-shanghai/the-suwa-maru-contingent/.

[283] Betty Peh-T'i Wei, *Shanghai: Crucible of Modern China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1987), 208.

[284] Hall, *In the Web*, 104.

is likely Frank presented himself as British to enter the armed forces; as Bickers shows, Eurasians could be excluded from service in the British army based on their mixed background. Bickers writes of the experience of Shanghai Eurasian Charles Cooke, brother of the previously discussed Louisa Cooke. Charles attempted to join the "10th Yorks" but could not convince the "War Office" he was of "pure European descent" and so the British War Office rejected him.[285] Frank sufficiently convinced the British army of his worthiness to join and later he received the 1914-15 Star medal for his service.[286]

Like many of his generation, World War I likely made a profound impact on Frank. As noted, the European communities in Shanghai displayed their patriotism during the conflict despite their physical estrangement from continental Europe. The foreign Shanghai community held festivities for the servicemembers before they left for Europe including a special service at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and a reception at the Palace Hotel. Frank and the over one hundred other young men "from all walks of life" then headed to the European battlefields aboard the SS Suwa Maru ship. On the forty-one-day journey the passengers practiced military drills, exercised, and listened to lectures as they prepared for war. Upon arrival, the regiment fought in major battles, including the 1915 Battle of Loos in northern France. Alan Hilton-Johnson, a member of the Shanghai Municipal Police, served with Frank. In a letter published in *The North China Herald* Hilton-Johnson described his war experience: "new soldiers, unblooded, thrust into a tearing battle, rain, wet through, done to a turn with long marches, no hot food, a

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[285] Bickers, *Getting Stuck in for Shanghai*, 44-45.

[286] "UK, British Army World War I Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," digital image s.v. "Frank Cecil Roberts", http://www.Ancestry.com.

murderous machine-gun fire, gas-shells bursting all around, strange country and amateur officers for the most part - and then can you wonder that things hung fire a bit? In my mind it was the highest trial that new soldiers could have." Hilton-Johnson later suffered a nervous breakdown and was deemed unfit for service.[287] During the war, sixteen of the one hundred and ten men from Shanghai died and Bickers concludes that "many of the others who rushed from Shanghai never recovered physically or mentally from the hardships and exactions of the war to end all wars."[288]

Figure 30"Clara and Frank's Wedding", 1925, Shanghai, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

Between the two world wars Frank made a life and a family in Shanghai. Frank worked for British-American Tobacco, the leading tobacco company in early twentieth-century China.[289] In Shanghai, Frank remained connected with his Hong Kong family, including his maternal half-siblings. Like many Eurasians at the time, Frank and his brothers Walter and Archibald grew up without their father present in their lives. Frank

[287] Bickers, *Getting Stuck in for Shanghai*, 84-85.

[288] Bickers, *Getting Stuck in for Shanghai*, 101.

[289] Carol Benedict, *Golden-Silk Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550-2010* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 137.

may have never learned his father's identity. He likely depended for support on his family members and a network of fellow Eurasians, which were often one in the same. All of Frank's maternal half-siblings, like their mother, married fellow Eurasians.[290] And in 1924 Frank married Clara Talbot (Figure 30), the daughter of Shanghai Eurasians Emily and Star Talbot.[291] Clara and Frank raised two children in Shanghai, a daughter Gloria born in 1926 and a son Frank born in 1930.[292]

Between the two world wars, warlord uprisings, failed political movements, fragmented power, and Japanese and Western encroachment led in part to temporary alliances between the Chinese Nationalists represented by the Guomindang and the Communists represented by the Chinese Communist Party. However, in 1927 the groups split, and the Communists retreated to "isolated rural areas" while the Nationalists, under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, ruled over much of China.[293] At the same time Japan extended its influence in northern China. After a series of violent events, including a clash between the Guomindang and Japanese armies in Shanghai, full-scale war broke out in 1937 between China and Japan. While the war briefly united again the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang, Spence explains that "by early 1941 the two parties were once again at loggerheads, engaging in armed clashes with each other, and

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[290] Walter married Martha Maasberg of German and Chinese parents from Shanghai. Archibald married Ruby Hall, the daughter of two Hong Kong Eurasians, Ying So or Ruth Ellis, and Sin Tak Fan or Stephen Hall. Sai-ki married Doris Lo whose parents were both Hong Kong Eurasians. Her daughter Phyllis married Edward Law, born to Scottish and Chinese parents in Canton. Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, 236. Hall, *In the Web*, 26.

[291] "District of the British Consul General: Copy of the Entry of Marriage of Frank Cecil Roberts and Clara Emily Talbot", March 1954, private collection of Joanna Ollerdeesen Wood.

[292] "Clara Emily Talbot Roberts". Find A Grave. Jun, 1, 2008, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27260036/clara-emily-roberts.

[293] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 259.

starting to position themselves and their forces in ways that looked more to the possibility of a future civil war than to the anti-Japanese exigencies of the present."[294] The violent encroachment of the Japanese directly affected Shanghai and most of all its Chinese residents. Yeh distinguishes three periods of the war between Japan and China in Shanghai. The first is the intense fighting in the lower Yangzi River occurring in the second half of 1937. Next, came the isolation of the foreign concessions which transformed them into "lone islets" as the Japanese occupied the Chinese section of Shanghai. During this period, which lasted from 1927 until December of 1941, the foreign settlements generally avoided the worst of the battles. However in August of 1937 Chinese planes attempting to bomb a Japanese warship inadvertently dropped two bombs within the International Settlement killing thousands.[295] The third period of warfare began after the Japanese bombing of the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.[296] On December 7, 1941, Japanese troops entered the International Settlement and "by 10:00AM sentries were also posted at the American, British, and Dutch consulates, newspaper offices, the Country Club, Racecourse, and cable offices."[297] Thus began a full Japanese occupation of Shanghai, including the foreign concession areas. Foreigners living in the International Settlement faced an uncertain future in a city occupied by an army at war not only with China but also the United Kingdom and the United States.

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[294] Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 391-392.

[295] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 38.

[296] Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*, 152.

[297] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 57.

Frank and Clara's daughter Gloria, fifteen years old at the time, remembers that "as soon as Pearl Harbor was bombed, they bombed a British and American gunboat that was on the Bund in Shanghai. We learned that war had been declared and we were enemies. Right away, barbed wire was all about, and Japanese guards were outside our house."[298] The Japanese required residents connected with the Allied powers, some from families with multigenerational roots in the city, to register with the occupying foreign government. American Shanghai resident Ruth Hill Barr recorded in her diary on Dec. 15, 1941 that "about 9,000 Br. & Americans have registered. 1156 Americans - rest British. Many of there [sic] are Eurasians, to be sure, with Br. Passports."[299] Gloria remembers that "after the war broke out, we all had to wear armbands. B for British, A for American, X for Belgians."[300] With Chinese and British backgrounds, Clara, Frank, and their two children registered as British citizens. Author Greg Leck contends that for the most part the armband requirement backfired on the Japanese as the "Chinese were now able to distinguish Allied nationals from neutrals or Axis and could show their sympathies. Armbands became a badge of respect amongst the Chinese. Shops gave special prices, a rickshaw puller might refuse to accept payment, and others would give the thumbs up sign."[301] Despite the camaraderie amongst the Allied nationals and the Chinese, they faced difficult circumstances under Japanese occupation. Barr describes

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[298] Gloria Ollerdessen, Interview, interview by Stacey Wood, 2007, private collection of Stacey Wood.

[299] Ruth Hill Barr, *Ruth's Record: The Diary of an American in Japanese-Occupied Shanghai 1941-1945* (Betty Barr, 2016), 63.

[300] Ollerdessen, Interview.

[301] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 59.

being cut off from any news not filtered by the Japanese. She mentions how she and her husband tried to save and cut back on expenses during the occupation by stopping their children's extracurricular activities and using candles instead of lights.[302] Gloria recalls that during the occupation, "we weren't allowed to go to movies or anything like that. We weren't treated right."[303] Teng reports that "when the Japanese invaded Shanghai, many Eurasian families fled to Hong Kong, taking refuge with relatives and business colleagues. Others left for the United States, the Philippines, and elsewhere—wherever their passports and finances could take them."[304] Many others however remained in the city. Some likely did not have the financial or personal resources to flee. Others may have chosen to stay, as in the case of Clara, because for generations their family knew Shanghai as home. Leck reports that "the 19 February, 1941 issue of the *North China Daily News* contained an article headlined 'Britons Reminded of Advice to Leave.' It reported that Britons 'who had no good reason for remaining in Occupied China' were reminded of the October, 1940 advice to leave."[305] Those unable or unwilling to flee the city endured the consequences. Beginning in 1941 the Japanese government imprisoned Shanghai residents of British and American ancestry and other allied civilians, moving them to "Civil Assembly Centers." Clara and Frank avoided internment for nearly two years, however they, like many foreign residents remaining in Shanghai, feared the inevitable amid the Japanese occupation of the city. In addition to taking over the

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[302] Barr, *Ruth's Record*, 53-58.

[303] Ollerdessen, Interview.

[304] Teng, *Eurasian*, 256.

[305] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 47.

Shanghai Municipal facilities and private companies within the foreign settlements, the Japanese froze all bank accounts, only allowing residents to withdraw a small amount of money each month. Anticipating internment, Frank sent some of his money to the nationalist capital in Chongqing. A wise move considering the circumstances, however after World War II, as the Chinese currency depreciated Clara and Frank's savings lost nearly all its value.[306] Clara and Frank remained in Shanghai after the Japanese occupation until 1943 when the Japanese forced them to move to an internment camp, the Longhua (Lungwha) Civil Assembly Centre.

Author Felicia Yap writes on the internment by the Japanese of Eurasians from Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore, and their experiences likely mirror those of interned Shanghai Eurasians. Yap reports the Japanese, like the British, had difficulty categorizing the Eurasian communities. The author asserts that, "Eurasians, being neither Asians nor Europeans, were thus to become in many instances an awkward group whose identities (and sometimes loyalties) were a source of perpetual vexation to the Japanese."[307] In the internment camps, Eurasians continued to face discrimination because of their mixed backgrounds. And like the prejudice endured within the International Settlement from both the Chinese and foreign communities, according to Yap, during the war both the Japanese and Westerners suspected Eurasians. Yap writes, "while the Eurasians on the outside were frequently accused by the Japanese of harbouring pro-British attitudes, the Eurasians in the camps were often suspected by their British inmates of spying for the

[306] Roberts, Interview with Clara Roberts.

[307] Felicia Yap, "Eurasians in British Asia during the Second World War: Joint Winner of the Sir George Staunton Prize," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21, no. 4 (2011): 491-492.

Japanese."[308] Even within the internment camps, where the fates of the captives intertwined, Eurasians faced discrimination and mistrust.

According to Leck, at the age of seventy-three Clara's mother Emily entered the Longhua internment camp along with Clara and her son George's families. Emily's brother Harry and his family were first held at the Longhua internment camp but were then moved to two additional internment camps near Shanghai.[309] Gussie White's parents were initially exempted from internment however in June 1944 foreigners exempted from internment, "all the aged, halt, blind, and lame" reported to the Holy Trinity Cathedral where nearly all of them were then moved to the newly constructed Lincoln Avenue internment camp. Leck reports that eight percent and a total of thirty-three of the Lincoln Avenue internees passed away while interned.[310] Gussie's father Augustus William, one of the internees, passed away in February of 1945.[311] Ordered by the Japanese government, in April of 1943, Clara, Frank, their two teenage children, and two of their young adult nieces moved into the Longhua internment camp. Frank and Clara took care of their nieces, both of whom were physically separated from their parents and siblings while interned. Eight miles southwest of the city on the site of the former Kiangsu Middle School damaged by Japanese bombings years before, the Longhua camp sheltered many prisoners in the largest internment camp in Shanghai.[312] Barr, also interned at the

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[308] Yap, "Eurasians in British Asia", 501.

[309] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 585-588.

[310] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 457-458.

[311] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 566.

[312] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 460.

Longhua camp, describes her living quarters: "the area of the room was about 12' by 14' and it had formerly housed two students. At least we had privacy as a family. Single people living in bed-spaces or cubicles in former large classrooms were not so fortunate."[313] Gloria describes a similar living situation: "we were miserable in camp. It was set up so that my father, my mother, my brother, Connie, Stella, and myself, six of us, were all close in together. I was right by the door, we had a curtain that went across, and then more people in the next space. So, they could hear you talking and everything, it was so close. Tiny quarters."[314] The Japanese guards at Longhua issued "Regulations of the Civil Assembly Centre" which included eighteen clauses. Clause four read, "the orders given by the Japanese officials and police guards shall be strictly obeyed and there shall be no act of defiance" and further that "violation of the above shall be dealt with disciplinary measures of short allowance, detention, etc. and in certain cases with severe punishments."[315] The guards assigned each captive daily work. The camp included a school, gardens, a shoe repair shop, sewing room, laundry, a library, a bookbindery, and other workshops. Clara and Frank's niece Constance reports that "it was a family camp so everyone had jobs to do and one of my jobs was to ladle the food out for people to eat at meal time…"[316] Gloria similarly reports that, "we all had chores, my father worked in

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[313] Barr, *Ruth's Record*, 128.

[314] Ollerdessen, Interview.

[315] Barr, *Ruth's Record*, 186-188.

[316] Dunton, Transcription, 9.

the pigsty, my mother worked in the children's kitchen and I did serving."[317] Frank's life in camp working the pigsty contrasted greatly with his work in Shanghai. Clara's life in camp is perhaps an even starker change, as she had multiple servants in Shanghai who cooked and cleaned, and an amah to help raise the children.[318] The Roberts family likely had trouble transitioning from a life of wealth and relative safety to the lifestyle of the internment camp.

Conditions within the camp varied. On four occasions prisoners attempted to escape from the camp; three of the attempts succeeded.[319] Barr writes that in the summer of 1944, a year and a half after the Roberts family moved in, the Japanese provided only 1,600 daily calories, which Barr reports fell well below the 2,400 recommended by the League of Nations.[320] Constance, whose Eurasian mother avoided internment, mentions the difficulty her mother faced finding food during the occupation and that at least in camp they had a steady supply of meals.[321] Those interned did attempt to make the best of their difficult predicament. Both Gloria and Constance fondly remembered the evening dances on the rooftops. Gloria mentioned playing mah-jong in camp and how she allowed a Japanese guard to win whenever he joined their games.[322] Clara remembers a time in camp when their connections and stealth allowed them to eat a special meal. As noted,

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[317] Ollerdessen, Interview.

[318] Roberts, Interview with Clara Roberts.

[319] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 462.

[320] Barr, *Ruth's Record*, 9.

[321] Dunton, Transcription, 9.

[322] Ollerdessen, Interview.

the Japanese government froze all bank accounts after occupying Shanghai. In addition to sending money to a bank in Chongqing, Frank also brought savings into the internment camp. He held half of his savings in the camp's bank and occasionally spent them for auctions and buying other goods. He hid the other half with friends in camp, a woman of mixed British and Japanese background and her British husband, who Clara does not mention by name. Clara recalls the Japanese guards' surprise in learning of her friend's Japanese heritage. The Eurasian woman lived in a separate home from the schoolhouse but was still held captive because of her husband's British allegiances. Clara notes the guards treated her well and that the woman used the friendliness of the Japanese guards to help others, including having local Shanghai food delivered in secret to Clara and Frank.[323]

Internees held at Longhua and other camps likely experienced a mix of fear and hope as they listened to news from hidden radios and looked for clues about the state of the war. In early 1945, internees could see United States Air Force planes flying overhead.[324] Beginning in August of 1945 Barr mentions rumors around camp about an impending Japanese surrender, further fueling the hope of the prisoners.[325] On the other hand rumors also caused fear. Leck reports that "one rumor was that the Japanese would make a last stand in North China and kill the internees." The veracity of this rumor is not certain, however the Japanese government did intend to move the thousands of prisoners

[323] Roberts, Interview with Clara Roberts.

[324] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 387.

[325] Barr, *Ruth's Record*, 269.

from Longhua to a more militarized camp closer to the combat zones. The United States government protested the Japanese plan through the Swiss Consulate, citing the hardship the move could cause. Leck reports many prisoners packed "emergency suitcases" to prepare for a sudden move. On August 15, 1945, the Japanese government surrendered by accepting the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation.[326] The Japanese guards abandoned the internment camps, leaving the internees to fend for themselves. For months, life continued in camp, as the internees remained isolated and estranged from support. Leck mentioned upon the closing of the Longhua camp in November of 1945 that many remained, largely because of housing difficulties. After two and half years in camp, the Roberts family returned to their Shanghai homes. The effect of the war and imprisonment was immeasurable. Leck contends that the "psychological problems and breakdowns of which were often seen while still in camp, increased in numbers and for some, remained a life long affliction."[327] Clara and Frank's children spent much of their formative years in camp, entering at ages thirteen and sixteen and leaving at ages fifteen and eighteen. Returning to Shanghai after the war, the Roberts family found a city largely unrecognizable, and the cosmopolitan Shanghai Clara grew up in would never truly return.

The state of Shanghai after nearly a decade of war likely shocked the former internees as they returned to their homes in a city that was "a shadow of its former self, a broken city." Leck describes the post-war region, noting that few public services

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[326] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 388-389.

[327] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 410.

remained. The Japanese occupied businesses and homes during the war, leaving them ransacked.[328] Former internees returned to homes missing valuables, pillaged by their former inhabitants. Some even found Japanese soldiers still living in their homes.[329] The destruction of the city during the war necessitated a transformation of Shanghai. However, the city would not return to the cosmopolitanism of its past. In 1943 the British and American governments agreed to abolish the extraterritoriality rights granted to them in the Treaty of Nanking and returned the foreign concessions to the Chinese. The street Clara grew up on, Bubbling Well Road, and other Western named streets were renamed by the Chinese. Many Westerners began to leave Shanghai, some returning to their native countries or the countries of their ancestors. Leck reports that many British residents moved to Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and many more moved to the United Kingdom. After the victory of the Communists over the Nationalists in 1949 the Chinese Communist troops entered Shanghai. The Communist victory further led to the evacuation of Westerners from the city. Leck reports that "by June 1951, less than 600 Britons remained in Shanghai."[330] Emily White and two of her daughters remained in the city. Clara remembers that her husband Frank decided to move to Hong Kong in 1948 as the Communist takeover of the city became inevitable. Clara reports that her mother Emily did not want to leave Shanghai, and she continued to live in the city until her death in 1958. In Hong Kong, Frank and Clara's daughter Gloria married a Eurasian man also

[328] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 407.

[329] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 412.

[330] Leck, *Captives of Empire*, 417.

born in Shanghai, an American Air Force veteran of World War II, Henry Ollerdessen. As noted, their union further complicated the interconnectedness of Eurasian families. Clara and Frank planned to follow their children as they planned to move to the United States. Figure 31 shows the couple with their son Frank, showing Hong Kong in the background. (Figure 31) Less than a month before the couple's scheduled boat trip from Hong Kong to San Francisco, Frank passed away at the age of fifty-five.[331] Clara, with her son, moved to the United States where she lived out the rest of her life, passing away in 1990 at the age of eighty-eight.

Figure 31 "Clara, Frank, and Frankie", 1950, Hong Kong, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

[331] Roberts, Interview with Clara Roberts.

Conclusion

In Hong Kong in 1948 Gloria, the daughter of Clara and Frank Roberts and the granddaughter of Lei Wai-Saan and Emily and Star Talbot, married Henry Ollerdessen, the son of Albert Ollerdessen and grandson of Louisa and Henry Ollerdessen.[332] After World War II, in which the younger Henry fought in major air battles in Europe and Gloria was held prisoner, the two met in their home city of Shanghai. According to Clara, after World War II and before the communist takeover, Gloria and Henry began to make a home in Shanghai.[333] However shortly before the birth of their first daughter the couple moved to the United States, settling near the hometown of Henry's American mother in Oakland, California. As their grandson, I grew up hearing stories about my grandparents' life in Shanghai. They told stories about the multitude of languages and cultures encountered in the city, stories about family parties, and stories about war and overcoming adversity. These stories told inspired this research project.

Much of the history of Eurasians in China is lost due to the passage of time, the keeping of family secrets, and displacement of Chinese Eurasians around the globe. This close examination of historical records, particularly those kept within families, begins to demonstrate the unique experiences of Eurasians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in China. Considering Eurasian identity and how they navigated within the cosmopolitan yet culturally segregated Shanghai society further showcases the complicated cultural encounters between Chinese and Europeans. In many respects

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[332] "U.S., Consular Reports of Marriages, 1910-1949" digital image s.v. "Gloria Claire Roberts," http://www.Ancestry.com.

[333] Roberts, Interview with Clara Roberts.

Eurasian households served as "the place of initial meeting of Chinese and Western thought and culture."[334] On the other hand the discrimination from both the Chinese and foreigners reveals the limits of these cultural exchanges. These family stories show how Eurasian's mixed backgrounds shaped their lives in the treaty ports. The findings do not express one common identity or experience amongst Eurasians but rather a multitude of identities and experiences. Gender, class, location, family circumstances, and more shaped the experiences of this group. Included in this study are individuals who led lives of anonymity and whose names remain hidden, as well as individuals who led lives of celebrities remembered by many names. Some were raised in Chinese cultural traditions, others in Western ones, but most, in a blend of Chinese and Western cultures. The family stories include veterans of war and prisoners of war, individuals from large families and others from single parent families, some who grew up in extreme wealth and others from difficult economic circumstances. These family stories serve as an example of the vast and diverse experiences amongst Eurasians in China.

[334] Knight, Chan, and Berliner, *Shanghai, 47.*

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